

The
**AGRICULTURAL
HISTORY REVIEW**

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VOLUME VII 1959

PART I

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

The Animal Remains found at Kirkstall Abbey
by M. L. RYDER

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Some Agricultural History Salvaged
by H. CECIL PAWSON

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The Tithe Surveys of the Mid-Nineteenth Century
by H. C. PRINCE

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Plough Rituals in England and Scotland
by THOMAS DAVIDSON

PUBLISHED BY

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

The Animal Remains found at Kirkstall Abbey	<i>M. L. Ryder</i>	page 1
Some Agricultural History Salvaged	<i>H. Cecil Pawson</i>	6
The Tithe Surveys of the Mid-Nineteenth Century	<i>H. C. Prince</i>	14
Plough Rituals in England and Scotland	<i>Thomas Davidson</i>	27
List of Books and Articles on Agrarian History issued since September 1957	<i>Joan Thirsk</i>	38
Reviews:		
<i>L'Homme et La Charrue à travers le Monde</i> , by A. G. Haudricourt and M. J.-B. Delamarre	<i>T. H. Aston</i>	48
<i>Farm Crisis, 1919-23</i> , by James H. Shideler	<i>Harwood Long</i>	51
<i>British Friesians: a History of the Breed</i> , by J. K. Stanford	<i>R. Trow-Smith</i>	53
<i>The Fruit Year Book, 1958</i>	<i>Winifred M. Dullforce</i>	54
<i>The Agricultural Register. Changes in the Economic Pattern, 1956-7</i>	<i>Edith H. Whetham</i>	55
<i>The Old Norwegian Peasant Community</i> , by A. Holmsen and others	<i>Margaret Davies</i>	56
<i>Origins of Ownership</i> , by D. R. Denman	<i>G. D. G. Hall</i>	56
<i>De Landbouw in Brabants Westhoek in hed midden van de achttiende eeuw</i> , by Ir. W. J. Dewez	<i>G. E. Fussell</i>	57
<i>Een Fries Landbouwbedrijf in de tweede helfte van de zestiende eeuw</i> , by B. H. Slicher van Bath	<i>G. E. Fussell</i>	57
<i>Een Samenleving onder Spanning</i> , by B. H. Slicher van Bath	<i>G. E. Fussell</i>	58
<i>Report of the Royal Commission on Common Land</i>	<i>Dorothy Sylvester</i>	59
<i>The Historical Atlas of Cheshire</i>	<i>H. P. R. Finberg</i>	60
<i>Where London Ends</i> , by E. W. Martin	<i>W. E. Minchinton</i>	61
<i>A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect</i> , by W. D. Parish and Helena Hall	<i>L. F. Salsman</i>	61
<i>Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century</i>	<i>J. W. Y. Higgs</i>	62
<i>Robert Bakewell</i> , by H. C. Pawson	<i>George Houston</i>	63
<i>Evolution of the Veterinary Art</i> , by J. F. Smithcors	<i>G. E. Fussell</i>	63
Notes and Comments		26, 37
Letters to the Editor		47, 64
Notes on Contributors		13

The Animal Remains found at Kirkstall Abbey

By M. L. RYDER

THE use of archaeology as an approach to the medieval period is fairly recent: where records and ruins existed it was not considered possible to add to our knowledge by excavation. The falseness of this assumption has been amply proved by the yearly excavations at Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds, led by Dr D. E. Owen when he was director of Leeds City Museums. There are no descriptions of Cistercian farm animals; and a study of the animal remains found at Kirkstall has been particularly illuminating in that it has yielded evidence of long-woolled as well as short-woolled sheep.

There were incidental animal finds in most years from 1950 when the excavation started, bones of rat, dog, ox, sheep, pig, and horse being found.¹ The discovery of the skeleton of a horse beneath the refectory floor seemed to indicate animal burial.² In addition, shells of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) and of mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) were found, often in great profusion, and there were cockles (*Cardium edule*) and whelks (*Buccinum undatum*) in smaller numbers. These are all marine and must have come from the coast. The shells were on the whole smaller than those of the present day, the oysters being markedly smaller and lighter, the major axis being only about half as long as that of a modern oyster.

But it was not until 1956 and 1957 that a large dump of bones was found associated with the meat kitchen.³ This was not built until about the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Cistercians were first allowed to eat meat. During these two excavations the dump has been shown to extend over an area at least 25 yards wide by 40 yards long, and to vary from 18 inches to one yard in thickness. This volume has been estimated to contain bones from about five thousand animals. A small pocket of the bones was sealed under a fifteenth-century drain leading from the meat kitchen annexe. This shows that the dump began to accumulate before the drain was made, probably as soon as the monks began eating meat, and its size suggests that the dump could have been in use until the dissolution in 1540. The majority of the bones were from animals apparently used to provide food. But the fact that

¹ *Kirkstall Abbey Excavations, 1905-54* (Publications of the Thoresby Society, XLIII, 1955).

² *Kirkstall Abbey Excavations, Sixth Report, 1956*.

³ M. L. Ryder, 'Report on the Animal Bones, Kirkstall Abbey Excavations', *Seventh Report* (1957), and *Eighth Report* (1958).

they were not all sealed means that intrusion of a few bones of a later date is possible. Shells were less common in this dump than in previous years.

Fowler discusses the lack of slaughter-houses in abbey plans, and suggests that animals were killed in a yard near the kitchen.¹ The meat kitchen annexe at Kirkstall, with its flagged floor and drain, seems a likely place for the killing, and one half of the annexe could have been used to store meat.

Nearly all the larger bones had been chopped, so that with limb bones it was usually the ends that were found. There were hardly any complete bones, and so few measurements of length could be made. The ends of the bones had frequently been chopped a second time; this suggests that they had been stewed and not roasted as a joint. The Cistercians originally ate vegetable stew, and it seems that when they began to eat meat they ate it stewed rather than roasted. With the ox, at any rate, nearly every bone in the body was represented, and so there appears to have been no preference for any particular joint or cut of meat.

Most of the bones were from domestic animals, and counts showed that 90 per cent were from ox, 5 per cent from sheep, 3 per cent from pig, and 2 per cent from deer. Bones from Red, Fallow, and Roe deer were found, but there were too few to estimate the relative numbers of the different species. The lack of antlers suggests either that the whole carcase did not reach Kirkstall, or that the antlers were used for such articles as knife handles.

The monks apparently bought or were given meat from wild animals to supplement that from their farm stock. Bones of rabbit and hare were found (the latter predominating), and in addition to bones of domestic fowl there were bones of duck and goose (which could have been either wild or domestic), and also raven, jackdaw, heron, woodcock, and blackcock (black grouse).

There were about as many fish bones as bird bones, and most of these seemed to be too large to have come from freshwater fish. The records of Fountains mention salmon, and that dried and salted fish (probably cod and ling), as well as oysters, were bought at Hull, Scarborough, and York. There was a skull of a goat, one rat bone, a few dog bones, and one horse bone.

The results of the counts show the proportions in which the different animals were eaten and cannot of course indicate the numbers of animals kept. It seems therefore that the monks ate more beef than any other meat. Sheep would be kept mainly for their wool; Eileen Power has said that in the Middle Ages "meat was only a use to which sheep not good enough to keep for wool could be put."² An idea of the actual numbers can be obtained from

¹ J. T. Fowler (ed.), *Memorials of Fountains*, III (Surtees Soc., 130), 1918.

² *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History*, 1941, p. 20.

a record of 1301, which states that the monks then had 618 head of cattle and 4,500 sheep.¹

The majority of ox and sheep bones were from at least mature animals (two to three years old), and the greater proportion of ox bones were from fairly old animals (between five and ten years old). This suggests that the monks were able to keep much of their stock over the winter; had a large number of animals been killed each year through lack of winter feed, one would have expected to find a high proportion of bones from young animals.

Three fragments of bone showing pathological changes were found. The first was a portion of a sheep tibia showing an area of local periostitis. The lesion probably underlay an inflammatory condition, such as an abscess, in the superficial tissue, and the fragment appeared to have been chopped from the rest of the bone because of the lesion. The distal end of an ox metatarsal exhibited a growth of new bone around the edge of the articular surfaces. This arthritis may have affected the articular cartilage, but the underlying bone was unchanged. The new growth was well developed on both posterior and anterior aspects of the bone, and in the latter had changed the arterial groove into a tube. The third find was a vertebral body, probably bovine, showing a spondylitis in which the new growth had resulted in bone extending over the intervertebral disc to produce the effect of 'lipping'.

The cattle were almost certainly hornless: not a single ox horn core was found among the immense amount of ox material. This is of interest because the chronicles of Meaux Abbey mention horned cattle.² Some of the ox bones were from animals as big as those of today, whereas others were from smaller animals. Many measurements were made of the widths of the proximal and distal ends of the cannon bones (only three were found complete). There was a very wide range in these measurements, but when plotted in the form of frequency diagrams three peaks could be discerned. The peak among the larger widths probably indicated bones from bulls, that among the smaller widths bones from cows, and the middle one (of greatest frequency) was probably from bullocks (castrated males).

One would expect more males than females to be eaten, but the bullocks probably were not just beef cattle. The great age of the animals, coupled with the large size of many of the cannon bones, suggests draught oxen, and it seems that these were killed for meat when they were too old to work. Many of the larger cannon bones had exceptionally wide distal ends. The cause of this broadening at the ankle is unknown; no previous record of the phenomenon in cattle has been found, but Dr J. Wilfrid Jackson has told me that

¹ *Fundacio Abbatie de Kyrkestall* (Thoresby Society, iv, 1895), p. 203.

² *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, III (Rolls Series 43, 1868), p. xvii.

cannon bones with broad distal ends are common in Iron Age and Romano-British sheep. Ox cannon bones that were extremely narrow may have remained permanently stunted because of poor nutrition during early life.

Most of the pig bones, unlike those of cattle and sheep, had lost their epiphyses and were therefore from young animals; in most of the lower jaws the sixth molar was erupting, showing them to be from animals about eighteen months old. The pigs were apparently therefore killed young, as they are today. The limb bones had the characteristic slenderness of unimproved animals,¹ and were on the whole smaller than those from present-day pigs. There were tusks of three sizes, and it is thought that the largest and the intermediate ones were from boars and sows respectively. But the smallest tusks were of a different character and it is suggested that these might possibly be from wild pigs.

The sheep bones were all smaller than those of present-day sheep, and the long bones had the characteristic slenderness of unimproved animals. The Cistercians at Kirkstall seem to have had both horned and hornless sheep. This provides interesting confirmation of the generally held belief² that they had two kinds, viz. horned short-woollen sheep and hornless, long-woollen 'valley' sheep. The horned and hornless skulls found showed a good resemblance to skulls from modern hill and long-woollen sheep respectively. I have been unable to find any contemporary descriptions of the sheep that the Cistercians kept in Yorkshire. Wroot seems to have got his evidence mainly from eighteenth-century writers such as William Marshall who said that the two main stocks of Yorkshire sheep had not changed for centuries. The hill or moorland sheep were then described as having black faces and coarse fleeces, and the valley sheep as being tall and clumsy, hornless, white-faced animals which produced the long, fine wool used in worsteds. In fact the two main stocks can still be recognized today, although there has been much cross-breeding, and each has given rise to several modern breeds.

Dr Bowden has questioned the classical belief in the existence of long- and short-woollen sheep in the Middle Ages on the grounds that an increase in the supply of long wool could be associated with the later improvement of pasture.³ It is more likely that this was associated with an increase in the number of long-woollen sheep and was not a direct effect of better nutrition on wool growth as he implies. In view of what is known of the inheritance of fleece types it is inconceivable that a small (most likely horned) short-woollen sheep could give rise to a large (most likely hornless) long-wool entirely as the

¹ J. Hammond, *The Growth and Development of Mutton Qualities in Sheep*, 1932.

² H. E. Wroot, *Yorkshire Abbeys and the Wool Trade* (Thoresby Society, XXXIII, 1935), p. 5.

³ *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, IX, 1956, pp. 44-58.

result of better nutrition. Such a change would require selective breeding. This article is not the place for a detailed discussion of the possible origin of the long-wool, which owing to lack of knowledge would involve much speculation.

Mr Trow-Smith, too, has recently discussed the tantalizing question of the origin of long-woolled sheep and suggests that the Romans might have introduced them.¹ That the long-wools form a stock quite distinct from the hill sheep is strongly suggested by recent work on blood types.² J. V. Evans found that whereas in the Swaledale (hill breed) 85 per cent of the sheep were of a certain blood type, the Leicester (long-wool) had no sheep of this blood type.

I have inspected some representations of sheep in medieval illuminated manuscripts at the British Museum. One of these showed polled sheep, a twelfth-century manuscript showed horned sheep, and a thirteenth-century one showed horned and polled sheep together.³ Although it would be unwise to place too much reliance on the appearance of these sheep, it is doubtful whether artists' licence would allow the omission of horns. And it is interesting that a sheep skull of date about 1300 which I examined from the 1957 excavation at the deserted village of Wharram Percy (Yorks.), led by Mr Maurice Beresford, was in fact polled. The inheritance of horns is complicated,⁴ but at Kirkstall one can almost certainly rule out breeds in which the rams are horned and the ewes polled, e.g. Welsh Mountain and Merino. In addition, castration of males in a horned breed is unlikely to cause loss of horns, only the reduction of horn size to that of the ewe.⁵ Evidence is therefore accumulating for the existence in the Middle Ages of polled sheep that were probably long-wools, although it is quite likely that they were outnumbered by horned short-wools.⁶

¹ R. Trow-Smith, *A History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700*, 1957, p. 165.

² J. V. Evans, *The Advancement of Science*, XIII, 1956, pp. 198-200.

³ Harley 603, fo. 69b; Royal xix, fo. 19; Adv. 20787, fo. 112b.

⁴ A. L. Rae, *Advances in Genetics*, VIII, 1956, p. 189.

⁵ A. S. Fraser, *Aust. J. Agric. Res.*, VI, 1955, pp. 770-5.

⁶ Since this article was written a new approach to the history of sheep has been started. This is the study of (particularly the grouping of) wool fibres remaining in ancient material such as parchment. Fibres in some of the parchment from the Dead Sea Scrolls showed characteristics of long-woolled sheep.—M. L. Ryder, *Nature*, 182, 1958, pp. 781-3.

Some Agricultural History Salvaged

By H. CECIL PAWSON

A CHANCE remark, made almost casually by my friend the late Major J. G. G. Rea (for many years Chairman of the Northumberland Agricultural Executive Committee), led to the exciting discovery of a number of letters written by Robert Bakewell to his pupil and friend George Culley in the closing years of the eighteenth century. These letters were in the possession of the late Mrs Leather-Culley at Callaly Castle, near Alnwick, among a large accumulation of correspondence destined for destruction. Mrs Leather-Culley was most co-operative and I soon found myself in a large store room on the top floor, surrounded by dusty cardboard boxes so crammed with bundles of papers as to daunt even the most enthusiastic researcher. For an hour I worked with no success, and then I picked up a four-page foolscap handwritten letter signed "Robert Bakewell," dated "Dishley, 28th April," and addressed to "Mr. George Culley, Fenton, Wooler, Northumberland." This moment of discovery remains vivid in my memory. Stimulated by this exciting find, my search was redoubled until ultimately I had retrieved thirty-two such foolscap letters, all written in Bakewell's own hand, together with a copy of his financial appeal, containing the list of many subscribers.

Visiting London shortly afterwards, I called at the British Museum and elicited the information that six shorter (quarto size) letters written by Bakewell were all that were available there. A call at Rothamsted revealed that the only Bakewell document preserved in the fine library at that Station was a copy of his financial appeal, which on examination I found was less complete than that now in my possession. So far as I have been able to ascertain after many enquiries, these are the only surviving original Bakewell documents. They are reproduced in full in my recent book, *Robert Bakewell, Part II, The Bakewell Letters—Culley and British Museum Collections*. The former collection has been presented to the School of Agriculture, King's College, University of Durham.

Looking back, I cannot but feel a sense of satisfaction that I made use of this almost fortuitous happening at a time when, like most agriculturists, I was already heavily burdened with other duties. I should like to record my gratitude to Mrs Leather-Culley for her gift of the letters and other papers and for her permission to "do with them just what you think is best."

"Other papers" included a variety of printed and handwritten documents on matters which can rightly be described as agricultural history. For ex-

ample, a lengthy printed document of considerable size sets out the full scheme and costs of equipment for the establishment of an experimental farm in Northumberland. This is dated just one hundred years before the famous Cockle Park Experimental Station came into being in 1897. Included are farming tenancy agreements of the Culley Brothers, who farmed so extensively in Northumberland. George Culley, said to be Bakewell's favourite pupil, was the author of *Observations on Live Stock*, 1786, a publication much praised by Bakewell. There were also sale catalogues of the eighteenth century of farms and livestock, with the prices realized marked in the margins, and other advertisements setting forth the merits of particular stallions and bulls.

One fears that much local history of this kind must have been destroyed as waste paper and in other unconsidered disposals in more recent times, and we may wonder how much material may still be lying about undiscovered.

As an example of interesting correspondence—until now part of the hitherto unpublished “other papers”—the following selection is made which illustrates the leadership of Bakewell and the range of influence of his Dishley Society. It also provides an interesting revelation of the opposition in Northumberland and elsewhere to those who rightly or wrongly were suspected of desiring for personal reasons a “closed shop” in livestock breeding.

Fenton 23^d March 1792

Dear Sir,

We now have it [at last *erased*] in Contemplation to enter into an Association on the Tup Business, and indeed a few of us Viz: Messrs. Thompsons, Nisbet, Self &c. had a private meeting yesterday at Wooler & were very unanimous, yet we are all of an opinion, that we have some Gent^m. Tup Breeders in this Neighborhood who will not Join us. And should that be the Case, as they are Men of some influence they will be enabled to defeat our best Intentions, without your Association will take us by the hand. And on this Occasion I am very happy in having it in my power to refer to a Paragraph in your letter to me of the 16th Decem^r. 91 as follows “I believe few if any of our Company will shew any Rams before the next meeting, & it is intended to shew from the 8th of June to the 8th of July, and after that day untill the 8th of Sep^r: and from that day while the Season Continues. And in order to prevent going to Market, I hope it will be agreed on not to let a Ram to any Person (Live where he will) but who will engage not to sell any Rams but what he shall see killed before they go out of his hands. Or take any to Market, but what are already disposed of for the season, with such other regulations as shall be thought proper” Now Sir this is what we in particular request to know from you immediately on receipt of this That is, if you have

entered into the above resolution "Not to let a Ram to any Person, live where he will, but who will engage neither to sell Rams without seeing them killed, nor shew any at Market with a view to let." Then we hope we can go on upon sure grounds, & shall immediately proceed on the receipt of your Answer. But, & if, your Association have not entered into the above resolution, & will let Tups to who ever come, without any Questions being asked, we must entirely drop all thoughts of the above Business. Because, if the above resolution is not determiningly gone into, the above Gent^m. or any other who have got pretty deep into the Dishley Blood, will be enabled to benefit themselves to the very great injury of this Association. And indeed ultimately it must injure the whole set of Breeders of that valuable Kind. That we may have as little Delay as possible in this important Business, you will Excuse me if I again request your immediate Answer. And after that if you think proper to shew this letter to the Society at your next meeting, and if approved of will favor us with a Correspondence, I am sure it will be very agreeable to our young Association and in particular to your

Obt^d. & Hble Serv^t
G.C.

P.S.

Our present Resolutions are

- 1 Not to market any Tups whatever
- 2 To shew only at a time (suppose 20 or 30)
- 3^d Not to sell Tups even to a Butcher, except killed before taken way.
- 4th To return only 1 again, except an Evident defect has been in the mode
- 5th Not to let a Tup below 5 . . 5
- 6th To sell no Ewes under phead except to a Butcher who you can depend upon to Slaughter them

NB. If it is not inconsistent with, or contrary to the rules of your Society we will be glad of your advice and assistance respecting our mode of procedure, and thankfull for such regulations, as you will please to recomend to us.—In a future letter, should these gent^m. prove refractory, I shall not think it wrong to give their Names to your Association, if approved by ours. That you Gent^m. may be the more particularly on your guard against them.—Will it not also be necessary to get the two Mr. Collings into our Association?

G.C. Copy of Let^r. to Mr. Bakewell

Sir

Fenton 23^d March 92.

Messrs. Thompson, Nisbet, Self & some other Breeders happening to fall in together yesterday at Wooler, & the Conversation turning upon Breeding. We considered, that a meeting of the Principal Breeders on both sides Tweed

might benefit the Cause. Have accordingly fixed upon Thursday the 5th of April next to meet at the Angel Inn, in Wooler, at 10 of Clock, in the forenoon, and not later. The above Gent^m. desired to Join in requesting the favor of your attendance along with Sir your &c.

G.C.

NB. I will also thank you if you will name the meeting to Mr. Harriot, & that the Gent^m. & myself will be glad to see him along with you at Wooler on the above day. Copy of let^r. to Wm Robison Esqr.

1792 March 23 Copy of let^r. to Mr. Bakewell on Association Business also one of same date to Wm. Robertson Esqr.

Fenton, 19 May 1792.

Well Sir,

A little while ago I told you that I should by and bye have occasion to write to you on the Tuptrade, or words to that Effect. Now you must know that the Tup Breeders in this corner, at least most of them, have for sometime had it in Contemplation to enter into a Society.—And in consequence of a letter I had yesterday, from Mr. Honeyburn Secretary to the Leicestershire Association. We have fixed upon Whitsun-Monday to meet upon this business, a very bad day for you to attend, however I hope either you or Bro. Charles will contrive to come, as I flatter myself it will be for all our mutual Benefits. And the members of this association earnestly request your attendance & concurrence, as well as your Bro^{rs} I am sure you can have no objection I hope to join Messrs—Robertson, Ladykirk—Alder, Horncliff—Nisbet—Potts—Thompsons—Culleys &ca &ca.

The foundation of the business is to take no Tups to Fairs or markets. To sell no Tups or Ewes of the Dishley Blood to Breed from. To shew only a certain number at once say 30. &ca &ca &ca with such other resolutions as may from time to time be agreed upon by a majority of the Society at any one meeting. The meeting will be at Joe Gibsons, Milfield ten oClock forenoon, on monday, the 28th Inst. where we will be very happy to see you or Bro^r. but if you cant come this time do say by letter before that day whether you incline to join us or not. And as I am much hurried, must request the favor of your reading this letter to Mr. Cha^s. Colling with the Compliments of the above Gentlemen requesting his attendance or at all events Sentiments on the occasion. I am for the above Gent^m. & Self your

ever obed^t HUMB^E. SERV^E

(Sgd) Geo. Culley.

Mr. Colling

Copy of Letter to Mr. Colling

P.S. I had almost forgot to tell you that our reason for meeting on the 28 is

because an answer must be with the Leicestershire Society on or before the 4th of June their next meeting—& the parties could not meet sooner conveniently. Sg. G.C.

19 May 1792. Copy of a Letter to Mr. Colling on Association Business.

Fenton 19 May 1792.

Dear Sir,

The Gent^m Tup Breeders in this vicinity having for some time past been inclined to enter into an association for the mutual Benefit of the Parties so associated; and having entered into a Correspondence with the Leicestershire Society of Ram Breeders, a proper understanding has taken place. And in consequence of a letter from the Secretary of that association we have fixed upon Monday the 28 Inst. to meet at Joe Gibsons at Milfield by ten o'clock forenoon, where I am requested in the name of the Association to beg your attendance, as we believe it will be for your interest to Join us. And I hope you can have no objection to join Mess^{rs} Robertson Ladykirk—Alder, Horncliff—Nisbet—Potts—Atkinson—Thompsons & Culleys &c&c &c. It is right to acquaint you that the principal matters we propose are not to take any Tups to Fairs or Markets—not to sell Tups or Ewes to breed from. Not to shew above a certain number of Tups upon any one day—with such other resolutions as may from time to time be agreed on at future meetings—If it should so happen either f^m Ilness particular Business &c&c. that you cannot attend on the above day. Be so kind as say by letter whether you approve & will join us at our next meeting of which notice shall be given you, in case you approve.

I am for the Above Gent^m & Self

Dr. Sir your Ever Obt. Servt.

Mr. Bates.

(Signed) Geo: Culley.

Copy of a Letter to Mr. Bates.

[erased P.S. I had almost forgot to tell you that our reason for meeting on the 28 is because an answer must be with the Leicestershire Society on or before the 4th of June their next meeting and the Parties could not meet sooner conveniently. Sg^d G.C.]

19 May 1792

Copy of a Letter

to

Mr. Bates on

Association Business.

Milfield 28 May 1792.

Sir

I was duly favored with yours of the 14th Inst. which was read before our Association this Day. And the Gent^m assembled beg their Respectfull thanks for the attention paid them by the Leicestershire Society of Tup Breeders And think that the Line would be best from the Mouth of the Humber up that River & the River Air by Leeds & Skipton, & so across Lancashire by the Town of Lancaster to the Irish Sea. If you approve of this, & will at your next meeting on the 4th of June extend your Resolution made to the 8th of June. "That no Member of the Leicestershire Society shall let or sell a Ram Share or part beyond the above Line Northwards so long as these Societies exist, except to the North^d. Society." "We will on our part engage not to Let or sell a Tup Share or part beyond the above Line Southward except to the Leicestershire Society" (An Honour we can scarce flatter ourselves ever to attain) Now we repeat that when we have your Answer & concurrence to the above resolution we will then go on with Spirit & firmness and are determined as soon as we hear from you again (which we hope will be immediately at or soon after your meeting on the 4th of June), provided it meet our wishes according to the above request, that we shall immediately depute 2 or more of our Members, to go South to reconoitre, and hire, if approved of some of your best Tups which we propose to do every year so long as we continue associated. I am for the Society & Self Sir

your obt^d. & Hble Ser.
Geo Culley.

P.S. We are now Ten & have reason to believe that Mr. Colling & 2 or 3 more will Join if we chuse, and shall be glad of the advice of your Society whether we shall admit them.

Copy of let^r. to
Leicester Society

11 June 1792.

Sir/

Wooler 11 June 1792

Yours of the 5th has just been read to this Society, who were disappointed that yours should not agree to the Line proposed by this in my letter of the 28th May. And I am desired to say that we will give up Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland & the West riding of Yorkshire. provided you will allow us the East & North ridings, with Durham this County & Scotland, because the Society think that a clear Line is best to be understood.—After saying this much we agree to your resolution in the meantime, untill our

deputies see you Gentlemen, which will in all probability be about the latter end of next Week. When if you could convene a meeting we could discuss this matter more fully, & settle many matters which cannot be so well done by Letter. Allow us to say that one great objection to the North & East ridings of Yorkshire being at Liberty for both Societys, is, that those parts are so near some of our opponents, that Ewes may easily be sent by them to Tups hired from your Society into Yorkshire, a matter we must recommend to you, to guard against in the strictest manner I am Sir for the Society, & Self your Obt. Servt. Geo Culley.

P.S. Shall thank you to let Mr. Bettison & Stubbins know that the two Deputies appointed by this Society will most likely be at the Blackmoors Head in Nottingham on Thursday Eve the 21st Inst & shall wait upon these Gent^m. on the Friday morning. Copy of let^r. to Leicester Society 28 May 1792.

The Association was duly formed, but the opposition continued, as is shown first by the meeting which was held in Berwick as advertised, under the presidency of the Earl of Home, and secondly by a further meeting held on 2 July 1792 at Coldstream. In the printed description of the business conducted at this latter meeting occur the following paragraphs:

"Several of the Farmers present having informed the Meeting, that they had attended the Meeting of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, and Farmers, held at the Red Lion in Berwick, on Saturday the 23d Day of June last, and having delivered in the Resolutions entered into at that Meeting, which being openly read.

"Resolved unanimously, that a monopoly of any Trade, or any Association, entered into by any set of Men, (especially of those whose Resolutions enjoin secrecy) are highly injurious to the Public; and that the Members of this Meeting will pursue every measure to counteract such Associations.

"Resolved by the Farmers, who were not present at the said Meeting, held in Berwick, That in case the breeders of Stock, or Members of the Association formed at Milfield in May last, do not on or before the 12th of August next, publicly dissolve the said Association, and advertise their intention to furnish the Public with Tups, or other Stock, as formerly, and on the same liberal Terms as other breeders in this County, that they will, on the 20th of August next, enter into Resolutions, nearly similar to those entered into by the Noblemen, Gentlemen, and Farmers, at Berwick, on the 23d of June last; and they will, at all times, give a preference to those breeders who will sell Tups as well as let them to hire."

These 'growing pains' in the movement towards livestock improvement

and the establishment of breed societies and standards illustrate the conflict between mixed motives of pride, prejudice, personal interest, and genuine desire for progress. They also indicate why Bakewell and his devotees were often under the fire of criticism for their secrecy and exclusiveness, with a measure of jealousy at times accounting for the intense opposition.

BERWICK June 9th, 1792.

JUNE 16th, 1792.

WHEREAS, several Persons, Breeders of Stock, in the County of Northumberland and Durham, who are in the practice of letting TUPS, have entered into an Association, or Combination; the Resolutions of which are generally believed to be inimical to the Public.

A Meeting is therefore to be held at the Red Lion, in BERWICK, on Saturday the 23d Instant, at 3 o'Clock in the Afternoon, to concert Measures for the purpose of counter-acting any such intentions.

THE Association formed for improving the Breed of Sheep in Northumberland, &c. have Associated for the purpose of going to an expence in pursuit of their object, which it would not be prudent individually to attempt.

That they have entered into a Combination inimical to the Country; (as an Hand-bill now in Circulation seems to assert) they beg leave to deny.

There can be no Combination in a Business, a participation whereof was offered to the Principal Tup Breeders in the Neighbourhood, nor can it be deemed inimical to the Country to improve its Breed, of so useful and profitable an Animal by the only means which appear to them adequate to the purpose.

W. PHORSON PRINTER BERWICK.

W. PHORSON PRINTER BERWICK.

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The Tithe Surveys of the Mid-Nineteenth Century

By H. C. PRINCE

THE rural landscape of England and Wales in the 1840's is depicted exactly in the field-by-field surveys carried out by the Tithe Commissioners. Their enquiries covered about three-quarters of the country. The maps drawn for each parish show the boundaries of fields, woods, roads, and streams, and the position of buildings, while the accompanying schedules give the names of their owners and occupiers, their state of cultivation, and their area. The amount of detailed information they provide about land tenure, field systems, and land use is unequalled by any other series of documents. Their accuracy is sufficient to warrant their continued use as evidence in courts of law on matters not directly connected with the payment of tithe. Their uniformity and comprehensiveness are surpassed only by the Land Utilisation Survey of the 1930's. Indeed, they rank as the most complete record of the agrarian landscape at any period.

The objects of the present enquiry are to examine the nature of tithe payments, to describe the purpose for which the surveys were made under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836, and to discuss their value for reconstructing the agrarian landscape of 1840.

THE NATURE OF TITHES

Tithes customarily represented a tenth of the annual increase of the produce of the soil and were of three kinds: predial tithes, payable on the fruits of the earth, such as corn, hay, wood, fruit, and other crops; mixed or agistment tithes, payable on animal products, such as colts, lambs, calves, wool, milk, eggs, and honey; and personal tithes, payable on the clear gains of a man's labour and industry, generally levied only on the profits of milling and fishing.¹ By common law, tithes were not payable on minerals or anything that formed part of the freehold. Deer, rabbits, partridges, pheasants, wild-fowl, and fish were titheable by special custom only.

In the first instance, tithes were paid to the rector of a parish, who might be a resident incumbent or a bishop, prior, prioress, monastery, nunnery, or college. An absentee rector normally appointed a vicar to perform his parochial services and allotted to him a portion of the revenues of the benefice,

¹ P. W. Millard, *The Law Relating to Tithes and Payments in Lieu Thereof*, 3rd ed., 1938, contains a concise account of the nature of tithes.

usually the small tithes. These included all tithes except those of grain, hay, and wood, which constituted the great tithes. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, rectories and tithes belonging to the dissolved houses were vested in the Crown, and most were subsequently sold to laymen. Lay impro priators still held nearly a quarter of the net annual value of all tithes at the time of commutation.¹

The payment of tithes in kind was a cause of endless disputes between farmers and tithe-owners. Very costly proceedings were entered upon to determine which courts should hear such suits, who was liable to pay, how payments should be assessed, and how they should be paid.² Frequent disputes arose concerning the nature of titheable produce. It was once decided that partridges were *ferae naturae* and therefore exempt from tithe, as were turkeys. On another occasion, wild cherries and fallen apples were adjudged to be subject to tithe. On yet another occasion, wild ducks were declared exempt, but the eggs laid by tame ducks used to decoy them were titheable. But the most difficult cases of all were those involving the produce of woodland. In some areas, all woodlands were exempt; in others, only certain trees; in yet others, the trunks and branches were exempt, but acorns, mast, and even charcoal were titheable. When tithes were allotted to more than one owner further litigation began. It was asked what constituted the vicar's tithe and how much belonged to the rector or lay impro priator. Should the tithe be collected by the owner, and if so, when; or should it be delivered by the farmer, and if so, to what place?

Tithes were an imposition which bore most heavily on progressive farmers whose yields were great but whose expenditure was also large. In areas where the profit to be gained by improvement was likely to be small, potential investors were undoubtedly deterred from venturing their capital because of the incidence of tithes. In Hertfordshire it was reported in 1795 that those parts subject to a reasonable annual money payment in lieu of tithes were generally farmed on improved methods, whereas lands liable to pay tithes in kind were often abandoned to almost total neglect.³ After the passing

¹ Out of a total of £4,054,405 8s. 7½d. tithe rent-charge, lay impro priators, schools, and colleges held £962,262 13s. 3½d. according to House of Commons Accounts and Papers (16), Session 1887, Volume 64, Return 214, Return of all Tithes commuted and apportioned under the Acts for the Commutation of Tithes . . . up to 30th June 1887. A comprehensive list of individual lay tithe-owners appears in Henry Grove, *Alienated Tithes*, 1896.

² J. A. Venn, *The Foundations of Agricultural Economics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1933, pp. 154-65, traces the history of the collection of tithe in kind during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. R. E. Prothero (Lord Ernle), *English Farming Past and Present*, 1912, devotes Chapter XVI, pp. 332-45, to the history of tithes and their effect on farming practice before and after commutation.

³ D. Walker, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hertford*, 1795, pp. 73-82.

of the act for the commutation of tithes, James Caird reported that extensive tracts of Salisbury Plain were reclaimed and brought under the plough for the first time.¹

The Board of Agriculture reports at the beginning of the nineteenth century unanimously condemned the payment of tithes in kind, but they noted that other forms of payment were common in most counties. Tithes were converted to other forms of payment by two different methods: either by a formal agreement between the tithe-owners and farmers, or alternatively under the terms of a parliamentary enclosure award. The first method often resulted in tithes being converted to a fixed annual money payment known as a modus or composition. But a fixed sum of money was not strictly equivalent to a tithe payment which varied from year to year according to the amount and value of farm produce. For this reason some agreements stipulated that a fixed sum be paid for an agreed number of years, some provided for a periodic revision of the payment, while others specified that the sum should fluctuate from year to year with the price of some commodity, usually wheat, sometimes other cereals, in a few cases jointly with wheat. An agreement to alter the method of paying tithes would be accompanied by a full valuation of the tithes, together with a large-scale plan and schedule of the titheable lands. A survey such as that carried out at Hatfield in Hertfordshire in 1824 is as comprehensive and detailed as any of the later tithe commutation surveys.

When tithes were dealt with under a parliamentary enclosure act, they were generally extinguished in exchange for allotments of land. In a study of the results of this procedure, based on an examination of twenty enclosure awards, covering the period from 1793 to 1815, Vladimir Lavrovsky concludes that almost without exception, "tithe commutation led to a diminution in the area owned by the peasantry."² Some lost as much as a fifth of their former holdings, and the majority lost more than one-ninth. But as Gonner pointed out there were marked regional as well as social differences in the manner of commuting tithes under parliamentary acts.³ In some areas they were invariably extinguished; in others, moduses and compositions prevailed. About 2,230 such acts passed before 1835 provided for the abolition of the payment of tithe in kind.⁴ In 1,510 of these all tithes were extinguished by allotments of land made to the tithe-owners; in 550 tithes were

¹ J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51, 1852*, p. 80.

² 'Tithe Commutation as a factor in the gradual decrease of landownership by the English peasantry', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, iv, 1933, p. 280.

³ E. C. K. Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*, 1912, pp. 316-8.

⁴ P. W. Millard, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

partly extinguished by allotments of land, and partly converted into annual money payments; in only 170 acts were tithes entirely converted into annual money payments.¹

THE TITHE COMMUTATION ACT OF 1836

In 1836 an act was passed to commute all tithes in kind and substitute a fluctuating money payment known as a corn rent adjusted each year on the basis of the seven-year average price of wheat, barley, and oats.² The amount of the corn rent-charge was to be obtained by dividing £100 of tithe into three equal portions of £33 6s. 8d., calculating how much wheat, barley, and oats could be bought with each portion, and multiplying these quantities by the average price in succeeding years. In 1836 the septennial average price of wheat was 7s. 0½d. per bushel, of barley 3s. 11½d. per bushel, of oats 2s. 9d. per bushel. At these prices £33 6s. 8d. bought 94·96 bushels of wheat, or 168·42 bushels of barley, or 242·42 bushels of oats. Each succeeding year the corn rent-charge on £100 of tithe was to be the sum of the septennial average prices of these quantities of grain. In this way the purchasing power of the money payment for which tithes were to be commuted was preserved.

The first task was to establish the boundaries of every district in which tithes were paid separately.³ This was known as a tithe district to distinguish it from a parish. In the meaning of the act, a parish included every place for which an overseer of the poor was appointed. The Commissioners first enquired into all the places listed as parishes in the census returns, but they could, if necessary, form separate districts. What was frequently disputed, however, was not the existence of a parish, but the exact extent of its boundaries. This was particularly important for some one who was a tithe-owner in one parish and a tithe-payer elsewhere. Again, the tithe payments themselves differed from parish to parish both in their nature and amount, so that a particular piece of land might carry a higher rent-charge if it were included

¹ Millard cites as examples of these: Brinklow Inclosure Act, 1741, 14 Geo. II, Cap. 14; Vicar's Rate in Halifax Act, 1830, 10 Geo. IV, Cap. 14; Kendal Corn Rent Act, 1834, 4 & 5 Will. IV, Cap. 16.

² An Act for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales, 13th August 1836, 6 & 7 Will. IV, Cap. 71. Its provisions were not to extend except in special circumstances to be decided by the Commissioners to: (1) Easter offerings, mortuaries, or surplice fees; (2) tithes of fish or fishing; (3) personal tithes other than those of milling; (4) mineral tithes; (5) payments in lieu of tithes in the City of London; (6) fixed annual rent-charges in a city or town; (7) lands whose tithes had previously been commuted or extinguished by Act of Parliament.

³ The best account of the procedure followed by the Commissioners in carrying out their enquiries is to be found in contemporary legal manuals such as Leonard Shelford, *The Acts for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales*, 3rd ed., 1842.

in one parish than in another. Land subject to tithe on one side of a boundary might even be exempt on the other.

The next step was to determine the total value of the tithes payable in each parish for the previous seven years from the actual receipts of the tithe-owners. The act enabled the tithe-owners and farmers to agree upon a valuation before 1 October 1838. When such an agreement was drawn up, it was submitted to the patron and the bishop for their approval, and then to the Commissioners for confirmation. If an agreement were not reached, the Commissioners were empowered to hold a local enquiry, to frame a draft award, hear objections, make amendments where necessary, and finally confirm their award, which then became binding on the tithe-owners and tithe-payers.

Once an agreement or award had been confirmed by the Commissioners, the rent-charge had to be apportioned among the lands of the parish. This was done according to principles agreed upon by the landowners, or if no principles were agreed upon, according to the average titheable produce and productive quality of the lands. It was inevitably difficult to apportion the rent-charge equitably among lands of differing quality and differing utilization, not because the actual use of the land was difficult to determine, but because its titheable produce was likely to change from time to time. Previously, it had been possible to reduce the amount of tithes by converting arable or meadow to pasture, thereby substituting a mixed tithe for a predial tithe of corn or hay; or to avoid the payment altogether by fallowing arable land, by allowing it to revert to uncultivated waste, by converting it into park or warren, or by planting it with trees. On the other hand, the tithe-owner was entitled to benefit from an increase in productivity resulting from land reclamation, artificial drainage, or other improvement. In fixing the apportionment of an area of marsh pasture capable of producing normal crops with the aid of artificial drainage, it was decided in an early test case that "regard was to be had to the probability of the lands being converted from one species of culture to another."¹ But in practice there was no way of assessing the probability of lands being converted to other uses, and the only alternative to rating all lands alike at the same value was to differentiate them on the basis of their observed state of cultivation.

Apart from making provision for the change of culture of hop grounds and market gardens, the act did nothing to prevent the temporary value of land being made the basis of a permanent charge.² Indeed, the method of appor-

¹ Cited by Leonard Shelford, *The Tithe Amendment Acts, 1848*, p. 39.

² William Eagle, *The Acts for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales*, 3rd ed., 1840, p. 58, comments on Sections XL, XLI, XLII of the Act of 1836, which outlines these provisions.

tionment authorized by the act was that based on an accurate field survey. The sternly practical instructions issued to surveyors in November 1836 appear to have been followed closely, except that the estimated costs for carrying out the surveys were not always strictly adhered to.¹ The essential purpose of the survey was to provide an accurate measurement of the acreage of each parcel of land, or tithe area, and to record its observed state of cultivation. For the purpose of valuation, the state of cultivation was entered as 'arable', 'grass', 'meadow' or 'pasture', 'common', 'wood', 'coppice', 'plantation', 'orchard', 'hop ground', or 'market garden'. There were, of course, different interpretations of these categories and additional categories inserted in some localities. In general, the most important distinction was between arable land, regularly ploughed and cropped, whose tithes amounted to about one-fifth of the value of the rent, and permanent grassland, whose tithes represented less than one-eighth of the rent. In the west of England and probably in Wales the arable appears to have included all ley grasses. In many parishes no distinction was drawn between meadow that was mown for hay once a year or more, and pasture that was normally used exclusively for grazing, yet the assessment of an acre of meadowland might be as much as eight times that of pasture. Woods, coppices, and plantations were not always separately distinguished and were omitted in many parishes where they were tithe-free. Lands devoted to orchards, hop grounds, or market gardens were usually classified according to their actual state of cultivation, but they might be rated as arable or grass and charged with a supplementary or extraordinary rent-charge.

A special problem confronted the Commissioners in apportioning the rent-charge of Lammas lands and commons. These were owned in severalty for only a part of the year; from Lammas to Candlemas they lay open to common grazing. At High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire the rent-charge was apportioned among two or more owners of the same plot of land in such circumstances. Similar considerations affected the apportionment on gated or stinted pastures.

A further difficulty arose in apportioning the rent-charge where part of the lands of a parish were exempt from tithe. Apart from lands for which tithes had already been commuted or extinguished by parliamentary enclosure, there were nine categories of land which were exempt from tithe:

¹ "Instructions for the Preparation of the Plans required by the Act 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 71 for the Commutation of Tithes, approved by the Tithe Commissioners, and adopted by the Poor Law Commissioners for the Plans to be made under the Parochial Assessment Act 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 96 (a)," 29 November 1836, quoted in full, with comments on its implementation by Shelford (1842), *op. cit.*, p. 482.

- (1) Lands naturally barren;
- (2) Barren heath or waste improved or converted into arable or meadow was exempt for a period of seven years after improvement;
- (3) Forest lands while in the occupation of the Crown or its lessee or tenant, but not if granted by the Crown in fee;
- (4) Glebe lands in the occupation of the parson;
- (5) Lands owned before 1215 by the Cistercians, Templars, or Hospitalers;
- (6) Lands which formerly belonged to one of the greater monasteries, and which had not paid tithes at the time of the dissolution;
- (7) Lands which had paid no tithes from time immemorial;
- (8) Lands in respect of which tithes were barred under the Tithe Act of 1832, which specified some lands which had not paid tithes for a very long time, the original cause of exemption being unknown;
- (9) Lands in respect of which a modus or composition was payable.

Even where an entire parish was exempt from tithes, much of the so-called tithe-free land carried a contingent rent-charge. When forest land passed out of the hands of the Crown, or glebe land out of the possession of the parson, it ceased to be exempt and became subject to a rent-charge. Even lands that were permanently exempt had to be precisely delimited by the surveyor, although it occasionally happened that land previously exempt was apportioned to an area subject to a rent-charge. Thus the rent-charge of the parish of Wye in Kent was apportioned among farms, and parcels of woodland, formerly exempt, came to be charged jointly with other lands in the farms of which they formed parts.

THE TITHE MAPS AND APPORTIONMENTS

The Tithe Commissioners succeeded in resolving many of the complex problems which had previously embittered relations between tithe-payers and tithe-owners. In a majority of parishes they were able to secure an agreement; in the remainder they imposed an award. Throughout the country they carried out their task with speed and thoroughness.

Almost all the 11,800 surveys in England and Wales were made before 1851; the majority before 1841.¹ In Norfolk, for example, 497 out of 660 were

¹ I am indebted to the Secretary of the Tithe Redemption Commission for permission to make use of his authoritative account of the tithe documents which appears under the title of 'The Records of the Tithe Redemption Commission' in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 1, 1957, pp. 132-9. There are different opinions as to the exact number of tithe surveys, Gilbert Slater in *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields*, 1907, p. 188, states that there are 11,783; W. E. Tate in *The Parish Chest*, Cambridge, 1946, p. 139, gives the figure of 11,787.

made before 1841; in Essex 272 out of 389. In spite of the additional work involved in valuation and apportionment, most of the survey was completed in about one-tenth of the time taken by the Ordnance Survey to complete its 25-inch plans. Yet speed was achieved without sacrificing accuracy. The Reports submitted to the Commissioners, the surviving minutes of local enquiries, and the correspondence in the Tithe Files held by the Commission testify to the thoroughness of the surveyors' work as well as to the vigilance of tithe-payers and tithe-owners, each jealously guarding their rights, or pretended rights, against infringement by the other party.

Many counties were almost completely covered by the surveys, the major exceptions, as Gilbert Slater demonstrated, being those which had dealt with their tithes at the time of parliamentary enclosure. The results of Slater's calculations are set out below.¹

Counties with a high proportion of tithe surveys:

	% of area covered by Tithe survey	% of area covered by Enclosure Acts
Cornwall	98·6	nil
Kent	97·8	nil
Devon	97·4	nil
Shropshire	93·4	0·3
Cheshire	91·3	0·5
Monmouth	89·0	0·4

Counties with a small proportion of tithe surveys:

Oxford	44·4	45·6
Rutland	39·3	46·5
Huntingdon	36·5	46·5
Bedford	35·4	46·0
East Riding, Yorks	35·1	40·1
Leicester	31·0	38·2
Northampton	23·5	51·8

The details of the survey for most parishes are set down in two documents: a map and an apportionment. The map or plan is usually drawn at a scale of three chains to an inch, approximately 26·7 inches to a mile, or at six chains to an inch, approximately 13·3 inches to a mile. Maps representing large parishes with detached portions and small fields, such as Dagenham or North Ben-

¹ Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

fleet in Essex, may cover as much as a hundred square feet.¹ Many plans are drawn from original surveys, carried out specifically for this purpose by local surveyors, but an earlier map of sufficient accuracy, such as an enclosure map, might be used instead. All maps show the boundaries of the tithe areas within a parish. The tithe areas usually correspond with fields, but in a few instances, such as Rhosbeirio in Anglesey, they constitute whole farms. On most maps the boundaries of enclosed fields are represented by continuous lines and those of unenclosed fields by dotted lines. Occasionally hedges and fences and gates are also represented. The amount of detail shown on the maps varies considerably. Most maps mark the course of streams, canals, ditches, drains, the outlines of fields, lakes, ponds, and the line of roads and footpaths. Many of them use distinctive tree symbols to show coniferous and deciduous woodland. On some, inhabited buildings are tinted red, the remainder shaded in grey. A few maps are rendered in full colour, to distinguish tithe-free land or various properties or farms or occasionally to show the categories of land use.

The apportionment is a roll of parchment sheets, $21\frac{1}{2}$ by $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches, consisting of three sections. The first section contains the articles of agreement or statement of award, giving the names of the Commissioners, surveyors, and tithe-owners, and the date of confirmation, and also stating the area of the parish, the area subject to tithes, a summary of the area of arable, grass, and other kinds of land subject to tithe, notes on the lands exempt from tithes, and a list of landowners and occupiers. The second and most important section is the schedule of apportionment in which each tithe area, numbered on the accompanying plan, is listed under the name of both its owner and occupier. In a parish which still lay in open fields, as many as three thousand tithe areas may be enumerated; in the majority there are several hundred; in some the rent-charge is apportioned by farms, occasionally without a survey being made of each field; in a few no apportionment is made, so that the whole of the titheable area of a parish constitutes a single tithe area. Where, as in the majority of cases, a tithe area is a field, the field name is recorded; where it is not a field, it is described, for example, as a "house and garden," a "piece of water," a "chalk pit," or an "ice house." Its state of cultivation is entered for the purpose of valuation according to the local practice. There are a few examples of the actual crops being noted, as at Narford in Norfolk and Erbistock in Denbighshire. The statute acreage and the value of the rent-charge apportioned to it are stated, and a final column is

¹ F. G. Emmison, *Catalogue of Maps in the Essex Record Office 1566-1855*, Chelmsford, 1947, contains a detailed list of Tithe Award Maps, pp. 53-63. Later acquisitions are listed in the *First Supplement*, 1952, pp. 34-5.

left for remarks. The third section contains the altered apportionments made after the original award was confirmed. These record major changes in the shape, size, and status of the original tithe areas resulting from subdivision or severance by public works. The building of railways, the construction of new roads, the re-allocation of land under an enclosure award, all necessitated altered apportionments. When the changes affected a large part of the parish a separate new apportionment might be made.

Three statutory copies of these documents were prepared. The original is now in the custody of the Tithe Redemption Commission in Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2; a second copy was deposited with the incumbent and churchwardens to be kept in the parish chest; a third copy was deposited in the diocesan registry. The second and third copies have sometimes been lost or damaged or transferred to a county record office.

THE ACCURACY OF THE TITHE SURVEYS

The accuracy of the surveys may be assessed in three ways: first, by their status as legal documents; secondly, by collating the information shown on the map with that recorded in the apportionment; thirdly, by comparing them with other sources of information.

Tithe maps bearing the seal of the Commissioners may, under certain circumstances, be produced as legal documents in deciding questions of title, general and public rights in a township, rights of way, and the existence of common rights in unenclosed parishes. Although only one-sixth of all the maps are sealed, the others have been considered sufficiently accurate for the purpose of several administrative enquiries. They have been consulted, for instance, by the Ordnance Survey when drawing the parish boundaries on the first 25-inch plans,¹ by the County Councils in preparing a survey of footpaths in 1949, and by the Royal Commission on Common Lands, 1955-8. In disputes between tithe-owners and tithe-payers the evidence of the map and award is always conclusive.

A few clerical errors might be revealed by checking the original tithe maps and apportionments against the surviving parish and diocesan copies, but as these are certified true copies, the total number of errors and omissions is likely to be very small. On the other hand, the differences between the information shown on the map and that recorded in the apportionment are worth investigating. In a number of parishes the map and apportionment were compiled at different dates, so that some discrepancies are due to changes in the intervening period. Such changes are occasionally noted in the apportion-

¹ *Account of the Field Surveying and the Preparation of the Manuscript Plans of the Ordnance Survey*, Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1873.

ment. References are made, for example, to the felling and grubbing up of tree stumps, to the reclamation of waste and heath, to the enclosure of commons, and to tree planting. In some parishes where the state of cultivation is not recorded or only partly recorded in the apportionment, the map may indicate the extent of certain types of land such as orchards, woods, and commons. In a few parishes, where the valuation was clearly not based on the land use observed on the ground, the state of cultivation entered in the apportionment does not correspond with the actual land use shown on the map. In such parishes, land shown as woodland on the map might be classified as "grass," and marsh or heath might be returned as "arable."

The accuracy of the measurements on the tithe maps can be readily ascertained by comparing them with the large-scale plans of the Ordnance Survey. The site of churches and the course of streams are easily identified, and most other features, including former field boundaries, can be traced with the help of air photographs. The amount of error revealed by such comparisons would almost certainly be negligible. It is more important to know to what extent a tithe district corresponded to a parish, to what extent a tithe area corresponded to a field, and to what extent the state of cultivation corresponded with the actual land use at the time of the survey.

The preamble to a tithe award usually states whether an entire parish is included in the survey or what portions are excluded, but these statements may be verified in a few parishes by reference to contemporary assessments for parish rates or poor rates, or compared with the enumerators' books compiled for the Registrar General, which record house by house the names of every one living in a parish or enumeration district at the time of the census. The names of the householders should appear as occupiers in the tithe apportionment, and the houses should be marked on the accompanying map.

Most tithe maps mark the boundaries of unenclosed parcels of land by dotted lines. Such lines may represent property divisions, separating holdings in an open arable field or common meadow, or they may represent either permanent or temporary divisions between lands of differing utilization in a field belonging to a single farmer. It is generally possible to confirm this distinction by referring to the apportionment, but contemporary private estate maps may be of some help in making a decision. Private estate maps of this period are, however, of only limited value in testing the accuracy of the tithe surveys, because most of them were either consulted by the tithe surveyors or are themselves copied from the tithe maps. Some of them were drawn by the same surveyor. Estate maps and sales catalogues may be of most use in checking the state of cultivation.

A few late altered apportionments may be compared with the Ordnance

Survey 25-inch plans. In a few exceptional instances, the land use information in the area books compiled in connection with the 25-inch plans drawn before 1880, and also the acreages of arable, grass, and orchard in the Agricultural Statistics, may be compared with the tithe surveys. But no valid conclusions as to the accuracy of the original tithe surveys can be drawn from such comparisons because an altered apportionment was only required for a whole parish when the land use and field pattern were completely transformed by an incident such as enclosure. Moreover, some information in the Ordnance Survey area books and the Agricultural Statistics which appears to be equivalent is not strictly comparable with that in the tithe surveys.¹

THE SURVEYS AS A SOURCE FOR THE GEOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND AND WALES

If the geography of England and Wales in 1840 is to be written, full use will have to be made of the tithe surveys. They provide a record of parish boundaries before major changes took place; of estates at a time when many of them had reached their greatest extent; of farms, representing every type of holding from fragmented open-field tenements to compact ring-fence units; of fields, both enclosed and unenclosed, in every variety of shape and size. They provide a record of the use of the land: whether cultivated or uncultivated, arable or grass, orchard or hop ground, heath or marsh, wood or agriculturally unproductive. They also provide a record of the names of land-owners and occupiers, and of the fields belonging to them. They can tell us how much titheable land belonged to estates of various sizes, and how much was owned by the Church or the universities or the railway companies. They can tell us how much arable land remained unenclosed in 1840, where it was situated, and who owned it. They can tell us what land was farmed by owner-occupiers or by tenant farmers, how much woodland or cottage property was occupied by owners or by tenants, and how much land was occupied by commons and highways. They can tell us whether farmsteads were situated in the midst of their own fields, or if not, whether they were attached to villages or hamlets. They can tell us what size and shape farms were in different parts of the country, and what proportion of a farm was arable or grass. These are but a few of the many questions that have yet been only partially answered.

The tithe surveys fully exploited, in conjunction with the 1841 census returns and enumerators' books, private estate accounts, surveys, farm leases,

¹ J. T. Coppock, 'The Statistical Assessment of British Agriculture', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, IV, 1956, pp. 66-79, compares and comments on the data for Edlesborough in Buckinghamshire, p. 78.

and the county reports published in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* between 1845 and 1869, would present a vivid picture of rural England in the mid-nineteenth century.

Notes and Comments

THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

A joint winter conference with the Association of Agriculture was once again held at the University of London Institute of Education; it took place on Saturday 6 December, and was very well attended. The chair was taken by the President, Sir James Scott Watson.

In the morning a paper was read by Dr F. N. L. Poynter of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library on The Place of Gervase Markham in English Veterinary Literature. In the afternoon session the conference heard a paper from Dr J. K. S. St Joseph, Curator in Aerial Photography, Cambridge University, on the use of aerial photographs in the interpretation of agricultural history. The conference concluded with the showing of a film illustrating the work of excavation at the deserted village of Wharram Percy in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The film, which was made by Ian and Betty Lauder, was introduced by M. W. Beresford.

INCOME TAX RELIEF

The secretary has been informed by the Chief Inspector of Taxes that the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have approved the British Agricultural History Society for the purpose of Section 16 of the Finance Act 1958, and that the whole of the annual subscription paid by a member who qualifies for relief under that Section will be allowable as a deduction from his emoluments assessable to income tax under Schedule E. This becomes operative as from the year ending 5 April 1959. It applies only to members whose office or employment is directly related to the subjects with which the Society is concerned.

EARLY BREEDS OF SHEEP

Captain Sir Hugh Rhys Rankin writes: "There is in Byton church, on the Radnorshire border of Herefordshire, a lamb carved in stone on the wall. In this lamb all the characteristics of the present Border Leicester sheep are quite apparent: a very level back, great depth of body, long legs, narrow neck and long face, and long and erect ears. The carving is dated c. 1350. It seems to me that this suggests the development of the Border Leicester breed of sheep from a medieval native breed of West Herefordshire."

Upon this, Mr R. Trow-Smith comments: "There were in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries two distinct breeds of sheep in Herefordshire. The ordinance of 1342 fixing minimum wool prices lists Hereford wool at £8 and a lower grade from the county at £6 13s. 4d. The minimum prices laid down in 1454 included £13 for Leominster wool and £5 for Herefordshire wool other than Leominster."

Robert Bakewell, in his trials, experimented with rams of "Durham, Wilts, Norfolk, Dishley, Charnwood Forest, and Herefordshire breeds." George Culley, Bakewell's Northumberland disciple, bought rams of Bakewell's New Leicester breed to improve his flock out of which, among others, the Border Leicester breed evolved. Culley was critical of Bakewell's prices, however: "I... have little expectation of you as a Customer as... others... are willing to give more money without thinking they are overcharged," Bakewell wrote to him. Other letters make it clear that Culley had previously (1791) bought rams which were not

(continued on page 37)

Plough Rituals in England and Scotland

By THOMAS DAVIDSON

UNTIL late into the eighteenth century Clydesdale ploughmen chanted the following rhyme three times on turning their horses at the end of ridges, in the belief that the fare asked for would be ready for them at the end of the fourth furrow:

"Fairy, fairy, bake me a bannock and roast me a collop
And I'll gie ye a spirtle aff my gad-end."¹

This nonsense rhyme takes on a different complexion when it is compared with what must be the earliest account of ritual ploughing amongst the Greeks. The agricultural significance of this account was first pointed out by Armstrong,² and it is to be found in the description of Achilles' shield in the *Iliad*. "Further he set in the shield a soft ploughed field, rich tilth and wide, the third time he ploughed; and many ploughers therein drove their yokes to and fro as they wheeled about. Whensoever they came to the boundary of the field and turned, then would a man come to each and give into his hands a goblet of sweet wine, while others would be turning back along the furrows fain to reach the boundary of the deep tilth."³

In both we note the ploughmen expected or were given refreshment on the completion of a certain number of furrows. Now in many parts of Scotland there was an observance with regard to the first ploughing or the first furrow drawn by the plough after the fields had been cleared of the grain crops. The ploughman engaged on the work was given refreshment in the form of food and drink and a portion was given symbolically to the plough: that is, food was tied or laid on the beam of the plough and drink was poured over it. This ceremony, known as 'streeking the plough', was an event of very considerable importance and is a survival of perhaps one of the oldest and most elaborate rituals carried out to ensure a prosperous ploughing and sowing.

At Hallgreen in the parish of Cairney about the year 1843 when one furrow had been ploughed, bread, cheese—a kebback (cheese) was broken for the occasion—and milk porridge made of oatmeal and sweet milk were given to the ploughman. The first slice of the kebback, however, was reserved for

¹ R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1841, p. 323. Spirtle=porridge stick; gad=ploughman's goad.

² E. A. Armstrong, *Folk-Lore*, LIV, 1943, p. 254.

³ A. Lang, *et al.*, *The Iliad of Homer*, London, 1893, pp. 382-3.

the 'herd-boy' and was called the culter wedge, a practice which immediately dates the custom back to the time of the 'twal owsen plough'. It was of the utmost importance that the porridge should be of the right consistency; if too thin, it was an omen of a poor crop of cereals the following season. The details of the ceremony varied from one district to another. In some parts the first offering of bread and cheese was laid on the plough-beam "as a sort of oblation to Ceres, the protectress of agriculture."¹

The following account from a farmer in Cateside, Strachan, shows that the day on which the plough was put to the soil for the first time was no ordinary day. On this particular farm the ploughman, wishing to start his ploughing early in the week, was put off by the farmer each day till Saturday came. On Saturday he was told he need be in no hurry to begin, and by the time he got to the field, the farmer was there carrying bread, cheese, and a bottle of whisky. The ploughman drank a glass himself, and refilling the glass poured it over the bridle of the plough, repeating as he did so the words, "Weel fah the labour." A piece of bread and cheese was then carefully wrapped up in a piece of paper and firmly tied to the beam of the plough by the farmer, who at the same time gave strict instructions to the ploughman that it was not to be removed. "It may fah off o't sell, or the dogs may eht it. Nae mairter, but dinna ye touch it." When all this had been carried out and agreed, he added, "Noo jist tak ye anither fur and syne louse. ['Now just plough another furrow and stop work.'] Ye'll be ready for yir wark on Munday's mornin'."²

The interesting point here is that the farmer put off the operation until the Saturday, because this Saturday ploughing, he considered, was a ceremony quite apart from the ploughman's "wark" which would start on the following Monday. Although there is little or no evidence to show which was considered the most propitious day to start ploughing operations, there is abundant evidence from all parts of the Highlands of Scotland on which was the unluckiest day. This was Good Friday. Indeed the belief held by the Highlanders that no iron should be put into the ground on this day was so strong that the more superstitious extended the ban to every Friday. The reason for this may well rest on the traditional belief that the nails of our Saviour's cross were made on this day.

In Buchan after the first furrow was ploughed the 'guid wife' proceeded to the field with bread, cheese, and a jar of home-brewed ale, or whisky. The cakes were specially prepared, being rubbed with cream before they were

¹ J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North East of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1929, pp. 86-7; J. Pirie, *The Parish of Cairney, Banff*, 1906, p. 143.

² J. M. McPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 87; quoting W. Gregor, *Folk-Lore Journal*, II, 1884, p. 330.

placed on the girdle over the fire to be cooked. The ploughman was usually the 'guidman' himself or his son, for in most parishes each family tilled its own holding. "The salutation to the man between the stilts was in the well-known form, 'Guid speed the wark', to which he replied, 'May Guid speed it'. He then seated himself on the beam of the plough, and after various forms of good wishes for the health and prosperity of the family during the year for which he had just begun the labour, cut the cheese and partook of the dainties carried to the field. A piece of the oat-cakes was given to each horse. The whole household partook at supper of the bread and cheese."¹ In upper Banffshire the bread was first blessed and a portion carefully placed under the first furrow.² In all cases, however, we find a portion of the food offering was kept until the evening, when the whole family gathered together at a supper feast, or *Pleuch Fehst* as it was called in Strathdon.³

Refusal to participate in the ceremony or to partake of the offering, even by the animals, had its dangers. This is well illustrated in the following tale from the north of Scotland. One evening "atween the sin an the sky," a man was ploughing with his "twal-ousen plew" when a woman came to him and offered him bread, cheese, and ale. The ploughman accepted, and the woman went on to offer each of the oxen a piece of cake. One by one the oxen took what was given, except the 'wyner'. The woman left and the ploughman resumed his work, but on the turn at the end of the furrow, the 'wyner' fell down and broke his neck.⁴

Now this Scottish custom of 'streeking the plough' has a close parallel in the Plough plays and costumed processions held in England on Plough Monday, the first Monday after Twelfth Day. In England Plough Monday has always been considered the date for starting ploughing operations. More than three centuries ago it was said that the ploughing of the soil should commence with the beginning of the year, which "with husbandmen is at Plow-day, being ever the first Monday after Twelfth day, at which time you shall gow forth with your draught and begin to plough."⁵ Or, as Tusser records it:

"Plough Monday, next after that Twelfth tide is past,
Bids out with the plough, the worst husband is last,
If ploughman gets hatchet, or whip to the screen,
Maids loseth their cock, if no water be seen."⁶

¹ J. B. Pratt, *Buchan*, Aberdeen, 1858, p. 21. ² J. M. McPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³ *Transactions Buchan Field Club*, IV, p. 148.

⁴ W. Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland*, London, 1881, p. 64.

⁵ Gervase Markham, *The English Husbandman*, 1613, Pt 1, chap. 5, lines 24-8.

⁶ T. Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, ed. W. Mavor, London, 1812, p. 270.

Mavor, commenting on this, says the ploughmen and farm maids vied with each other in early rising on Plough Monday. If the ploughman could get his implements placed by the fireside before the maid could put on the kettle, she forfeited her Shrovetide cock.

The Plough plays seem to be confined to or characteristic of the counties grouped together in the centre of England, i.e. Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire. The Willoughton (Lincolnshire) version called the Plough Jack's Play was performed by a band of farmworkers parading the streets and calling at each house. The procession took the form of two plough lines kept parallel by means of short sticks spaced at intervals between them, one man at each stick representing a horse. Then came the waggoner driving them with a long whip and an inflated pig's bladder on the end of a lash. Next came the plough which they trailed. The plough was without wheels and ready for ploughing. Having arrived at the house they demanded entrance civilly. If allowed in, they performed their play and were rewarded with food and drink. If they were not admitted, then they ploughed up a furrow or two in front of the house.¹ A curious detail comes to light here; the mummers arrogated to themselves an over-riding authority and sanction for this action. When remonstrated with for driving the ploughshare into the ground, they replied simply, "There's no law in the world could touch them because it's an old charter."²

In Wakefield, where the play was last performed in 1865, the two youngest farm lads acted as drivers of the plough, the oldest as collectors and the rest as horses.³ In the Alkborough version known as the *Plough Jags*, the play ended in a song, one version of which goes as follows:

"Good master and good mistress,
As you sit around the fire,
Remember us poor plough boys,
Who plod through mud and mire,
The mud is so very deep,
The water is not clear,
We'll thank you for a Christmas box,
And drop of your best beer."⁴

The play itself followed the standard pattern of mummer plays, except that

¹ *Journal English Folk Dance and Song Society*, I, 1939, p. 291.

² L. Spence, *Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game and Rhyme*, London, 1947, p. 158.

³ W. S. Banks, *A List of Provincial Words in Use in Wakefield*, London, 1865, p. 52.

⁴ *British Calendar Customs: England*, London, 1938, II, pp. 96-8.

one of the central characters, usually St George or a king, was replaced by a scapegoat character in the guise of an old woman.

The Plough Monday processions were very similar to the Plough plays, and they had a wider distribution. In these the performers danced either a sword dance or a form of Morris dance through the streets, dragging behind them a plough brightly decorated and dubbed the Fool Plough. The plough was dragged from door to door, where the ploughmen asked for bread, cheese, and ale, or a contribution in money. Hutchinson gives us one picture of the Northumberland ceremony. "Men in gay attire draw about a plough, called the stot plough, to obtain contributions and when they receive a gift from a house visited by them they exclaim *Largess*, but when they do not receive a gift from the House they plough up the ground in front of it. I have seen twenty men in the yoke of one plough."¹ Pegge, writing in 1672, describes how "on this day the young men yoke themselves and draw a plough about with musick, and one or two persons in antic dresses, like jack-puddings, go from house to house, to gather money to drink. If you refuse them, they plough up your dunghill."²

In Northamptonshire the performers were called plough-witches, in Huntingdonshire plough-witchers, and the ceremony plough-witching; while in Holderness 'ploo-lads'—fantastically dressed farm lads—dragged round a 'fond-pleaf', a plough from which the share has been removed. One of the chief characters was a man disguised as an old woman. Occasionally, if the winter was severe, the procession was joined by threshers carrying their flails, reapers bearing their sickles, and carters with their long whips; even the smith and miller were among the number, for the one sharpened the ploughshares and the other ground the corn.³ On all such occasions, we are told, "the peasants wished themselves a plentiful harvest from the great corn sown (as they called wheat and rye) and also to wish God speed to the plough as soon as they begin to break the ground."⁴ Here, as in late Scottish rural celebrations, particularly 'Burns' night' suppers, appears the familiar toast or blessing "God speed the plough."

Coming down to the present day, Plough Sunday is kept in many churches throughout the agricultural areas of England. A plough is brought into church and blessed that the year's labour may prosper. For example, the ceremony carried out in a Sussex church in 1956 is recorded as follows: "In our Sussex church the plough that will be taken into church is over a hundred

¹ W. Hutchinson, *History of Northumberland*, 1798, II, App., p. 18.

² C. Hole, *English Custom and Usage*, London, 1950, pp. 31-2.

³ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., London, 1914, II, p. 329.

⁴ *The British Apollo*, II, 1710, p. 92.

years old, and was no doubt one of those made by a local ironmonger who was the inventor and manufacturer of an improved iron plough, for light and heavy soils, shown at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851.

"Following the choir and clergy a farmer, who is also a churchwarden, will lead the procession of the plough up the aisle—on either side will walk a couple of stalwarts from two other farms while another holds the handles and, rather nervously, 'drives' the plough. Reaching the chancel step the farmer will formally state to the Vicar his reason for bringing the plough to church, offering the work of the countryside to the service of God. So the service will proceed, the farm workers taking their part. . . The old iron plough rests on the soft carpet of the chancel."¹ And in London the Plough Monday ritual, stripped of all its ancient ceremonial, is still observed each year by the Lord Mayor. In the old days the Mayor and Aldermen visited farms belonging to the City to witness ploughing matches, for the day marked, as it does to the present time, the occasion on which the Lord Mayor officially resumes office at the Guildhall. Now he performs the ceremony by journeying to the Guildhall to preside over a Grand Court of Wardmote, a court convened annually to receive returns from the wardmotes held on St Thomas's day, and to hear petitions against the elections should there be any.²

Though the Scottish 'streeking' and the English Plough play ceremonies differ in many respects, they have a common incident. The ceremony clearly is one of propitiation, and a survival of an old fertility rite associated with the cultivation of the soil, and whose observance was governed by the desire to secure a good harvest. In this connection Frazer records a custom from Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire, which may have been originally an integral part of the same ceremony. There on the day after Plough Monday a 'straw-bear'—a man completely swathed in straw—is led on a string and made to dance in front of each house, in return for which a money contribution was expected. The 'straw-bear' represents the corn spirit bestowing his favours on every homestead after the ploughing and sowing ceremonial had been performed to quicken the growth of corn or reanimate the corn spirit.³ Indeed, in the Hallgreen observance, the slice of cheese laid on the plough-beam is specifically stated as being a sort of oblation to Ceres, the protectress of agriculture. The plough, dressed up in highly decorative ribbons, represented the central figure of the mime; the choicest fruits of the soil were sacrificed in the hope that nature would return this gift in the form of an abundant harvest, and the ceremony ended with a feast and a prayer offered to the god or spirit who controlled the crops and harvest.

¹ *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1956.

² *Ibid.*, 8 Jan. 1952.

³ Frazer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 329.

In the Plough plays the usual character of St George or king is replaced by an old woman, a change in cast which points to the old belief that the corn spirit was generally thought to be feminine. The ritual here represents a piece of symbolism in which no detail may be omitted, so that, by going through a mimetic ceremony, it sets an example as it were which nature is expected to follow. The old woman is 'thrashed' to death and brought to life again. In the same way as threshers using their flails to beat out the live seed from the chaff, so is the ageing spirit of the corn beaten out of the scape-goat old woman to allow of the rebirth of the new and rejuvenated corn spirit. The gestural elements in the crude acrobatic dances were mimetic in character so that the ensuing crops, it was hoped, would grow as high and vigorously as the dancers leaped and danced.

Our remarks so far have been confined to the remnants of the plough ritual as they are still to be found in Scotland and England. The ritual, however, is as old as the plough itself. The origin of the traction plough, that is, a man- or ox-drawn plough, has been traced to the ancient near East, and, as far as we know, a ploughing ritual was evolved at the same time.¹ The plough with its associated ritual appeared in this country by diffusion or a culture-borrowing process, not by independent invention or evolution. This is readily apparent when we compare the ancient ritual with the Scottish ceremony. The active elements in the earliest known forms of the ritual differ in points of detail only from the Scottish 'streeking'. In Homeric Greece the ploughman found a cup of wine awaiting him at the end of the furrow; in ancient China the emperor was refreshed with wine after he had guided the plough along several furrows "in a sacred field, or field of God as it was called."² In Morocco the ploughman was offered bread made without yeast, ordinary bread, and dried fruits, and in the Rif country bread was broken over the plough-beam.³ We know too that the appropriate gods, Osiris in Egypt and Demeter in Greece, were invoked by the ploughman at the inauguration of the ploughing. Demeter was propitiated with an offering of the first fruits at a feast called the *Procrisia*, that is 'Before the Ploughing'.⁴ In Strathdon the feast was called the *Pleuch Fehst* or 'Plough Feast'.

Bishop poses the question "whether it [the plough] was not itself actually of priestly origin, and first employed in the production of sacred crops destined for ceremonial uses." Examples of areas set aside for this purpose are the Rharian Plain near Eleusis dedicated to Jupiter, and the Sacred Field ceremonially tilled every spring by the Chinese emperor.

¹ C. E. Bishop, *Antiquity*, x, 1936, pp. 280-1; Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

² Frazer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 14. ³ E. Westermarck, *Folk-Lore*, XVI, 1905, pp. 38-9.

⁴ Frazer, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 45, 48, 50.

Now the 'Halieman's ley' or 'Guidmans Croft' in Scotland, a plot of land set aside and untilled, was dedicated to the devil, and in Ireland similar plots in cornfields were set aside and dedicated to the fairy.¹ The devil here is without doubt the christianized form of the witch-god, and in an interesting hypothesis Miss Murray has bracketed together the witch and fairy beliefs and identified them as the relics of a pre-Christian religious cult.² Nutt, commenting on the origin and meaning of the fairy cult, suggests that it was "based on an agricultural ritualism . . . of a particularly rigid and inflexible nature."³ It may be that we have, in the Scottish and Irish sacred plots, surviving remnants of the same ancient sacred field system in which the tilling and sowing was ritualistic in character and the succeeding crops were set aside for ceremonial purposes.

These customs were so closely associated with heathen idolatry that the early church could not sanction them; but, recognizing their reality and undoubtedly power, she endeavoured to wean the people from the practices by absorbing them into her own ritual. Thus Plough Monday became an occasion for blessing the tilling of the soil. The ceremonial or church plough used was kept in the church, probably, although on this specific point we have no precise information, in front of the altar of the Ploughmen's Guild. The following entry is to be found in the old church account of Holbeach; it occurs in a list of church goods disposed of by the warden in 1549. "Item to Wm. Davy the sygne whereon the plowghe did stand . . . xvj."⁴ In Nottinghamshire in 1638 ploughs were still kept in Hawton and North and South Collingham,⁵ and a correspondent writing in 1852 says, "Less than ten years ago, in the belfry of Castor church, Northamptonshire, was an old town plough, roughly made, decayed and worm-eaten . . . about three times as large as an ordinary plough."⁶

Plough lights or tapers of the rush or wax type were kept burning before the Guild altar. They were placed there and paid for by the local husbandmen, in order to ensure success to their ploughing and subsequent labours throughout the remainder of the year. Payment or contributions were made in the form of money or barley: for example, at Sutterton, in the year 1490, a sum of ten shillings was paid by "Thomas Raffyn of ye plowlyth" and in Northborough, Nicholas Tighe in 1533 donated "to the plow light . . . ijd."

¹ T. D. Davidson, *Agricultural History Review*, III, 1955, pp. 20-5.

² M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, London, 1921, p. 14; App., pp. 238-48.

³ L. Spence, *The Fairy Tradition in Britain*, London, 1948, p. 308, quoting A. Nutt, *The Voyage of Bran*, London, II, p. 233.

⁴ W. Marrat, *The History of Lincolnshire*, Boston, 1814, II, p. 104.

⁵ M. W. Barley, *Journal English Folk Dance and Song Society*, VII, 1953, p. 72.

⁶ *Notes and Queries*, VII, 1853, p. 339.

When the donation was in barley, it was recorded as follows: Luton, 1511, "To the plough light . . . ij stryke of barley;" in Warmington, 1532, "To the plowe lyzth . . . ij stryke of barley."¹

It would appear that one of the main duties of selected members of the guild called plough-masters or wardens was to maintain in good order the plough and plough-lights, and to keep the accounts of the plough-light fund. They are mentioned in the following Leverton accounts, together with particulars concerning the amounts paid in to the plough-light fund and the amount paid out to the Plough Monday celebrations.

Plough Light:

1498	Resseuyd of ye plowth lyth of Leuton	xls.
1526	Of Thomas Sledman of benyngton for debt of Robert warner of ye plough lyght	xxd.
1531	Of Thomas burton for debt of ye plowlyght	xxd.
1559	Resaued of willyam Wastlare jun. & John pullw'tofte of the plowygh lyght mone	xvijd.

Plough Monday:

1577	Recd. of the Plowe maysters	xxijs. viijd.
1611	For ayle on plomunday	xijd. ²

Information on the duties of these Plough masters is given in the old churchwardens' book of Waddington.³ Under the date 1642, four persons were appointed as "Plowmeisters," and from the accounts, it would appear that these appointments were made annually. They had in their hands certain money called plough money, which they undertook to produce on Plough day. The form of this undertaking is as follows:

1642. "Andrew Newcome hath in his hands the sum xxs. and hath promised to bring the Stocke upon plow-daye next, and hath hereto set his hande."

1738. "Memorandum that John Foxe hath in his hands £2 10. 0. of the Plow-money which sum I acknowledge myself indebted to the town of Waddington."

¹ *County Folk-Lore*, vi, 1912, pp. 172-3; *Archaeological Journal*, 2nd Series, xx, 1913, pp. 382, 363, 425.

² E. Peacock, *Extracts from the Churchwardens' Accounts of Leverton*, 1868, pp. 6, 17, 21, 29-30, 33, 36.

³ *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, i, 1888, pp. 86-7.

From the plough money fund the 'plow-wardens' of Cratfield in 1547 bought a new plough for 8d.¹

As the Reformation dealt the death blow to all religious guilds, the Plough Play did not escape, and most if not all ceremonial was abolished. The churchwardens' accounts for Holme Pierrepont in Nottinghamshire show clearly the effect of this step. In 1552 the parishioners had to pay an assessment tax annually to the church stock because the usual collections "with hobby horse and light" were now prohibited.² The residue or outstanding balance of the plough-light money was confiscated by the church or parish. And in Leverington, near Wisbech, for example, we find the plough-light money was added to the town stock, that is, the fund from which villagers could borrow capital. Those who had borrowed during the year had to attend and settle their score "at ye settynge forthe of ye plowghe every yeare."³ This misuse of plough-light funds is also apparent from the Waddington accounts, where, under the year 1706, there is an entry:

"On plow-day ye 7 January paid to the Ringers and Minstrels 1-4.
Spent at the same time..... 1-9."⁴

We have now passed in review some of the variant elements in a ploughing ritual known in Scotland as 'streeking the plough', and in England appearing as the central theme of Plough Monday processions and plays. Although the ritual is the same they appear, however, at different levels of survival. In England the ritual is represented by remnants only, which have been taken up into rural festivities, costumed processions, and folk plays. As a result of Christian influence and toleration towards avowedly pagan customs, the ritual became more sophisticated and assumed a certain stability and sanctity, as evidenced by the many church-ploughmen and plough-light guilds. Two factors contributed to the decline of the ceremony. The first, as we have already noted, was the Reformation, which abolished, or at any rate purged, the guilds of much of their ceremonials. The second cause was the changing pattern of farming from arable to pastoral which took place, particularly around the central midland areas where plough-play activities were mostly concentrated. This gradual change-over to pastoral farming meant the inevitable displacement of the ploughman from his position of first importance on the farm. In Scotland late into the nineteenth century the ritual

¹ *British Calendar Customs*, II, 1938, p. 102, quoting J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts 1400-1700*, 1913, pp. 248-9.

² Barley, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 72, quoting *Fenland Notes and Queries*, VII, pp. 184-90.

⁴ *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, I, 1888, p. 87.

persisted in a form closely resembling the ancient ceremony carried out in the near East. The authority of the Church and influence of the Reformation, which was no less intemperate or hasty in action than in England, was not felt to the same extent in the country areas where the ceremonies were most commonly observed. The absence of Plough Plays from Scotland may also be attributed to the prevailing system of small-scale farming and, therefore, the absence of sufficient numbers of young farmworkers to make up the play teams. The result has been that the ritual, the 'streeking of the plough', continued in the same form until eventually, with the passage of time and the enlightenment that came with education and agricultural progress, the ceremony has fallen into desuetude.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (continued from page 26)

among Bakewell's best and that three years earlier Bakewell had been putting "a Dishley Ram" on "a Hereford Ewe."

It is probable that what Culley bought from Bakewell was not one of the true New Leicesters but rams which were bred from, and bore some of the character of, the old Hereford breed whose wool was the lower priced in the medieval lists: and that this blood carried on the ancient West Herefordshire type into the modern Border Leicester.

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY IN THE NETHERLANDS

We have recently received details of the following organizations concerned with agricultural history in the Netherlands.

Nederlands Landbouw-Museum (Netherlands Agricultural Museum), Stationsstraat 1, Wageningen. Director: Dr J. M. G. van der Poel.

Founded in 1936, this museum contains rooms which exhibit the salient features of agriculture and rural life and also the history of the town of Wageningen. The museum collections will ultimately be combined with the

collection of old agricultural tools gathered together by the Department of Rural History (see below).

Studiekring voor de Geschiedenis van de Landbouw (Agricultural History Society). Secretary-Treasurer: H. K. Roessingh, Bosrandweg 7, Wageningen.

Founded in 1939, it has 180 members both Dutch and Belgian. Its main functions are to publish a yearbook and papers and to hold annual conferences and excursions.

Nederlands Agronomisch-Historisch Instituut (Institute for Agricultural History). Grote Markt 26, Groningen. Director: Dr. L. S. Meihuizen.

Founded in 1950, it acts as a centre for the collection of information and bibliographical material. It has published since 1953 *Historia Agriculturae*, a yearbook which contains an international bibliography of works on agricultural history.

Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis van de Landbouwhogeschool (Department of Rural History). Herenstraat 21, Wageningen. Founded 1952.

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Compiled by JOAN THIRSK

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¹The date of publication is 1958 unless otherwise stated. The compiler wishes again to thank Mr George Green for help with this bibliography.

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Letter to the Editor

AGRICULTURE IN ROMAN TIMES

SIR.—Dr Applebaum writes: "While previous cultivation was mainly confined to chalk and limestone soils, Belgic settlement began to invade the medium loams."

I believe this may be true of certain areas which came under their influence. The Belgae, however, are not supposed to have arrived before 100 B.C. We have grain deposits from the coastal strip of West Sussex dating back to 350-250 B.C., showing that earlier immigrants had realized the value of this flat country.

Concerning the writer's summing up of the crops introduced by the Romans, namely club wheat and flax, the probability is that these two plants were reintroduced, as club wheat has been recognized in deposits from several Iron Age sites. Flax impressions in pottery come from Windmill Hill, Wilts (Neolithic),

and Westwood, Fife (Middle Bronze Age).

Dr Applebaum considers that "the level and productivity of Roman agriculture in Britain involved advances over the pre-Roman system." This no doubt applies to growing crops, but to what extent? Wheat was certainly the predominant crop, and in Roman days was grown more extensively than in former days, although the average cereal deposit on inspection portrays a very mixed one, wheat being the biggest constituent although other useful plants had evidently crept in such as Bromus. Little if anything was done to separate these seeds from the true cereals, and one must assume that plant breeding, or at any rate selection, had advanced very little.

Yours faithfully,

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Book Reviews

A. G. HAUDRICOURT and M. J.-B. DELAMARRE,
L'Homme et La Charrue à travers le Monde.

Paris, 1955. 506 pp.

No single instrument has so affected the history of the last 5,000 years as the plough. Like Pliny's ploughman, with back bent to his task, this history has been bent, even on occasion yoked, to the plough. We may—for some time yet, we must—dispute the finer points of the relationship; the precise effects of plough type on field shape, village site, community, and so on. But no one is likely now to question its broad and impressive proportions, or willingly to put the plough (as does the Bayeux Tapestry) in the margins of the story. By implication, indeed, English medieval historians at least have, in a sense, often erred the other way, by concentrating too much on arable fields, too little on pasture, rather as if, in the line of some sixteenth-century writers, they felt the plough's advance alone represented solid and typical agrarian achievement; an emphasis which has not, unfortunately, prevented us being very mistaken about the history of the plough in England, and consequently probably wrong about much of the history of settlement. As these recently corrected errors show,¹ it is too soon to hope to write a definitive history of the plough, even in a single country, let alone "à travers le monde." But so much valuable work has been done recently that some preliminary attempt at synthesis was desirable, if only to suggest lines of future enquiry. This book, the twenty-fifth volume in the important series of *Géographie Humaine* directed by M. Pierre Defontaines, attempts to do two main things. First, and more important, to reconstruct the typology of the plough throughout the world's

history, basing this typology on detailed regional evidence; and secondly, to suggest ways in which this typology has been related to the needs and environments of men. The result is the most important general contribution to our knowledge of plough types that has yet appeared, rivalling Leser² in learning (though not, unfortunately, in clarity of type³), and excelling him in, so to say, human understanding.

The human emphasis is fundamental and gives the work distinctiveness. Even when some general proposition of typology is presented a shade too enthusiastically, we seldom stray far from the men who made and used the tools. Their mental and physical habits of work, the living basis for their abiding conservatism; their inherited craftsmanship; the changing needs of climate and soil; these and kindred points will ultimately be much more fully understood, but the *importance* of understanding them is here firmly and decisively accepted.

This general approach is carried through with a great breadth of knowledge and an impressive bibliography. The familiar types of evidence are all used: cylinder seals from the ancient middle east; representations of many kinds from ancient Egypt, Greece, and later periods; the literary records, Pliny being discussed in considerable detail; the early Scandinavian instruments on which Glob has recently written a study of fundamental importance;⁴ regional plough types in use in the past two centuries or so, this information being summarized in several valuable, if small-scale, distribution maps. Some of the archaeological material is used less than is normal, for example the details of finds of coulters (there is

¹ See especially F. G. Payne, 'The Plough in Ancient Britain', *Archaeological Journal*, civ, 1947, pp. 82-111; 'The British Plough', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, v, 1957, pp. 74-84.

² P. Leser, *Entstehung und Verbreitung des Pfluges*, 1931.

³ The paper is wretched, and the stitching spasmodic and inadequate. Books of this importance deserve better presentation. They also demand an index; it passes understanding why it should have been issued without one.

⁴ P. V. Glob, *Ard and Plough in Prehistoric Scandinavia*, 1951, which the authors have, I believe, overlooked.

a special reason for this) and shares. Again, as an examination of wheeled carts and harness shows, further comparison of ploughs with other tools, especially harrows, hoes, and spades, would (as the authors point out) be valuable. On the other hand, the authors adduce less well-worn evidence: ideograms from the middle east and China; detailed consideration of variations in the nomenclature of the plough and its parts which, despite obvious pitfalls,¹ can give important indications of date and distribution. One striking limitation in the evidence is its sparseness for the period between the ancient worlds and fairly modern times. A great deal of work needs to be done here. In this country, for instance, medieval accounts need closer investigation; and more discussion will surely clarify the vexed question of the size and composition of the medieval plough-team.²

The diversity of recorded plough types is, of course, enormous; and the nature of the evidence—inadequate dating, the forced reliance on survivals in backward areas, for instance—makes the task of discerning the different stages of development incredibly difficult. The typology here presented is, in many respects, novel; and, on the whole, it rings true. Its basic division is between the (early) symmetrical instrument, the *aratum* or ard, and the asymmetrical *carruca* or plough properly speaking. And, although the book's title implies concentration on the latter, in fact it is the ard which takes up more space. Whether

or not the ard originated elsewhere—and the authors toy with the idea that it came from an area of 'dry farming'—the first for which we have evidence are in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, the oldest going back to about 3000 B.C., and implying, by their already advanced development, a considerable past. These ards are of very distinctive construction; two handles meet together at the lower end to form a pointed, symmetrical share beam and share combined, the 'depth' of which, in the Egyptian examples, is regulated by what we know as a sheath.³ Their use is also distinctive, for, according to the authors (as against the view of Leser), they were primarily associated with sowing, either by a central drill fixed between the handles, or broadcast. It is from these already diverse ancient middle eastern ards that—it is assumed—all the ards and ploughs of the world derive. It is here suggested that the later development of the ard took three main lines, more or less distinct. First, the type called here the *araire chambige*, in which the handle (usually single) and share beam (whether combined in one piece or not) pass through a mortise in the plough beam; in most cases, the share, if separate, is of the tanged type (with the bar share as the limiting type), here referred to as the *reille* (L. *regula*). The well-known Døstrup and Donneruplund ards⁴ and the votive bronze model from Cologne are of this kind; and the Virgilian *aratum* is generally (and surely rightly) interpreted as such

¹ e.g. though a *carruca* was extensively used in Anglo-Saxon England, the O.E. verb 'to plough' is *erian*, cognate with L. *arare*. For the word 'coultar' see Payne's remarks, *Arch. Jl.*, civ, 1947, p. 92n.

² Two important recent contributions on English ploughs are overlooked by the authors: H. M. Colvin, 'A Medieval Drawing of a Plough', *Antiquity*, xxvii, 1953, pp. 165-7; M. Nightingale, 'Ploughing and Field Shape', *ibid.*, pp. 20-6. Col. Drew's work, deposited in the Public Record Office, shows the value of medieval accounts.

³ Not, however, in all Egyptian examples; e.g. W. S. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, 1958, pl. 58B (Dynasty XI, 2134-1991 B.C.).

⁴ The description of these instruments (pp. 78 ff.) is not altogether accurate; each has a pointed share (separate or made out of the foot of the handle or ard head) and what Glob calls a fore-share (here *reille*). Payne also seems to be wrong (*Agric. Hist. Rev.*, v, 1957) when he writes (p. 75) that the Donneruplund ard 'proves that the well-known specimen found at Døstrup in 1884 was incomplete, that it had lost a very important part, the ploughshare. . . The size of the mortise in the beam foot itself should have raised doubts about its completeness.' On the contrary, as Glob's plan of the mortise shows (Glob, *op. cit.*, fig. 57), there is no room for such an additional piece; nor need for it, since the ard head is fashioned into a share, being altogether more massive than the ard head of the Donneruplund ard which had a separate wooden share. There were clearly at least two varieties of 'bow ard' (*araire chambige*); equally efficient (there is no question of the Døstrup ard being merely a 'thin pointed stick' as Payne

(though not here).¹ Secondly, the *araire manche-sep*, in which the plough beam passes through a mortise in the combined handle-share beam; in modern times, at least, this has been the most widely distributed type. Thirdly, the *araire dental*, which has a (usually narrow, straight, and 'shallow') share beam into which the plough beam and the handle are separately tenoned. This is familiar as the instrument of ancient Greece, and the authors argue (not, in my view, convincingly) that Virgil's *aratum* was also of this type; the 'crook ards' of ancient Scandinavia are a slightly developed variety. In each of these three types, the handle is most often single, but the lower portions of the primitive double handles survive, it is suggested, in the ears or projections often found on each side of the share beam.

These three main types, and numerous variants (including the corresponding rectangular types, which Leser made into one of his two basic plough types!) had clearly emerged long before the beginning of our era, which is the approximate date to which the authors assign the appearance (in the west) of the *carruca*, an instrument which is constructed and operated asymmetrically, and which turns rather than merely pulverizes the soil. There was clearly an intermediate stage during which the *aratum* was employed similarly, by leaning it to one side and using the ears (or equivalent) to turn the soil. This adaptation of the *aratum* led easily to the addition of a coulter, of wheels to facilitate control (noted by Pliny as a recent innovation), and of a better device to guide the soil over (of which the mould-board is the final example). As future development showed (see e.g. the modern English swing plough) the wheels were the least important addition. By contrast, coulter and better turning device were fundamental, and the differences in their arrange-

ment and design divide *carrucae* into two basic types: those in which the ploughman can choose which way he turns the soil (the so-called "one-way plough"); and those in which he cannot.

Broadly persuasive though this typology is, not all its stages carry equal conviction. Since so much depends on the precise point at which an instrument was introduced into an area, it is not surprising, given the present uncertainty over much of the dating, that there are gaps in our knowledge where a rather theoretical typology must do service for sound historical evidence. On occasion, the authors hardly seem to have allowed sufficiently for the variety of skills and therefore the adaptability possessed by users of the plough in some primitive communities; for instance, the late Bronze Age rock engravings at Finn-torp show two very different types of ard presumably in use in the same area; Pliny points to similar variety, and in this country British coulters may indicate differences between instruments. Again, the transitional stage between the *aratum* and the *carruca* is hardly stressed adequately. As Payne's articles have shown, this is one of the really crucial moments in the history of the plough, symmetrical construction (or nearly so) and asymmetrical use, allowing the soil to be deeply cultivated and properly turned as demanded in well-watered land. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the authors have no very clear place in their typology for this kind of bastard employment. But they also minimize the use of coulters with ards. They admit that coulters were occasionally so used, but (I suspect) almost feel that they ought not to have been. They explain most of the early iron coulters as belonging to a separate instrument, a *courier*, consisting merely of a coulter attached to the end of a beam, with a handle for control, for whose existence they cite one or two modern

says), though the Døstrup ard must have been more difficult to make and more expensive to maintain because the combined share-handle demanded much working and might need complete replacement if the share part was damaged.

¹ See the very important article by R. Aitken on 'Virgil's Plough', *Journal of Roman Studies*, XLVI, 1956, pp. 97-106. Perhaps we should take more seriously Seneca's comment that Virgil "aimed not to teach farmers, but to please readers" (*Epistula*, 86.15).

examples and the evidence of Pliny. Neither kind of evidence seems to do their case much good. Pliny, if read in a good text,¹ seems, more probably, to say what most people have always supposed him to say; that, for the first ploughing (the verb is *proscindere*, on the technical meaning of which see Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, I. xxix. 2) of very thick or dense land (*praedensa terra*) there was a special type of share used in conjunction with (and, literally, preceded by) a coulter on the same instrument.

If plough types are difficult to arrange in historical sequence, the factors which determined their evolution can, as yet, only be glimpsed in broadest outline; climate, soil, field shapes, resources of the users, and so on. But it is at least clear that simple generalizations will not suffice. We are now much more cautious than historians once were about the relationship between ploughs and fields. Consider also the effects of race and political domination. If the authors are right, the political influence of China and of the Hindoo civilization were vital in the spread and evolution of the plough in the east; in the west, while they agree that the Roman Empire brought no fundamental change in plough types, they suggest (not very plausibly) that it may have helped to spread the *araire dental*. By contrast, the barbarian invasions no longer seem the great determinant they did, and like (apparently) the Arab conquests, probably had little effect on plough types. On these and similar points, the authors have contributed a great deal. But they would be the first to agree that the task of explaining the history of the plough is only in its infancy. "Nous ne présentons pas notre ouvrage," they conclude (p. 464), "comme une 'conclusion' mais comme un 'point de départ'." If there is injustice in this, it is at least as unjust to them as to their predecessors in the field. One hopes, however, that this remark will not be used as a general invitation to speculate on

world-wide plough history. A synthesis of this kind was certainly needed. But, between the lines, its most insistent lesson really is this: the present need for close study of all types of evidence on a less ambitious scale.

T. H. ASTON

JAMES H. SHIDELER, *Farm Crisis 1919-1923*.

Cambridge University Press for University of California Press, 1958. x+345 pp. 37s. 6d.

It is a sobering experience to find the events of the early 'twenties already being described by a historian and the result selected for review in a historical journal. The historian is James H. Shideler of the University of California and he deals with the farm crisis in the U.S.A.

His book is based on a most painstaking study of records of public agencies, private manuscript collections, federal documents and official publications, newspapers and correspondence, farm journals, memoirs, and in fact of wellnigh all the records, published and unpublished, on the subject. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that it reads more like a documentary than a commentary, although the reasons Mr Shideler gives for the Crisis, and its significance in America's agricultural history, are easily the most interesting features.

Agriculture in the U.S.A., as in most other countries, underwent a period of extreme depression between 1920 and 1923 in the process of readjustment from the inflated conditions that arose during the first World War. Mr Shideler thinks the period marks a "gulf between two worlds of American agriculture, an old world of soaring ambition resting upon expansion and land value increment" and a "new world of uncertainty distinguished by diversity, inequality, and contraction," and this, presumably, is the reason why he has concentrated his attention on the events of this relatively short period of time. Cer-

¹ The text the authors use is not the best. They omit the word *infelix* (?*infelix*) which qualifies *cultor*, and, later on, give the name for the wheeled ploughs as *planarati* without mentioning the more probable *plaumorati*. There are at least eight other mistakes, one of which makes complete nonsense of the Latin.

tainly there were things that the first World War changed for ever, and an important one in the U.S.A. was its metamorphosis from a debtor to a creditor nation. But fundamentally there was nothing new in the position, for prices had "tobogganned" before 1920, and *The Grapes of Wrath* described conditions in the 'thirties.

Even the attempt which the farmers made to influence government policy in the early 'twenties had its prototype in the Populist Party which achieved such success that in 1890 it was swept into power in a dozen southern and western States and inspired William Jennings Bryan to urge the Democrat Party to fuse with it. And if the troubles in the 'twenties were the result of overproduction, they only reflected the misfortunes of an earlier generation of farmers whom a Kansas virago implored to "raise less corn and more Hell." Mr Shideler seems to think his historical model is a linear one, when in fact it is cyclical.

The emphasis which he puts on overproduction is another feature of Mr Shideler's thesis with which not everyone will agree. No one will question his facts: some crops suffered from overproduction, others were left on the shelf by temporary market dislocations, while the railroads chose this of all times to impose big increases on their rates for agricultural goods. Moreover Europe, although still desperately in need of food, was in a position to pay only much lower prices than previously. But are these facts of themselves sufficient to describe the catastrophic price falls that occurred with such suddenness in the middle of 1920 and continued for eighteen months? Mr Shideler does not ignore credit shortage and the policy of the Federal Reserve Board during this period. Indeed he devotes six pages to examining the interpretation which farmers put on monetary policy. But he gives no indication that monetary causes were very close indeed to the heart of the trouble. Rather he blames farmers' organizations for concentrating their attention on a credit "plot," and seeking relief through emergency credit expansion when

they should have been "searching for the causes of the agricultural crisis." The fact that the decision of the Federal Reserve Board to increase the re-discount rate to 7 per cent coincided with the beginning of the fall in prices receives much less attention than its importance deserves. Yet most students of the subject would agree that the tightening of credit had an overriding effect on the course of prices in this period, just as the demonetizing of silver was responsible for the suddenness of the recession in the middle eighteen-seventies.

This is not an exciting book: Steinbeck is much more readable. But there are some interesting features in it. It shows, for instance, that the idea of the 'soil bank' is not so novel as may be thought from the publicity it now receives. As early as 1921 *Wallace's Farmer* was trying to persuade farmers to 'bank' the fertility in the soil by raising less corn and more legumes.

Mr Shideler gives interesting sidelights on some of the chief actors who occupied the agricultural stage at this time. Henry C. Wallace was described by one of his friends as "a natural born gamecock . . . redheaded on his head and in his soul." As Secretary for Agriculture he "lived close to his job and kept farmer hours. He was tautly nervous; the strain of responsibility to farmers during their crisis and exhausting battles within the administration to protect his department were physically wearing." His death in 1924 suggests how near to the truth was this assessment of Wallace.

The quotation which gives Liberty Hyde Bailey's conception of farming, too, is too rare to be lost: "it is the farmer's rare privilege to raise crops and rear animals. The sheer joy of the thing is itself a reward. . . It will be a calamity if we sacrifice this vast reward by insisting so exclusively on a financial or business view of agriculture. By such insistence we shall make the occupation sordid." There was wisdom in erecting one or two other buildings between Bailey Hall and the Farm Management Building on the campus at Cornell!

These pictures stand out from a mass of

rather wearying detail which is unlikely to interest many British historians or agriculturists. But for any one who wishes to refer to the sources of the history of the period, this book is first-rate.

HARWOOD LONG

J. K. STANFORD, *British Friesians: a History of the Breed*. Max Parrish, 1956. 216 pp., illus. 18s. 6d.

Breed histories have a Betjemanesque air about them: they tend to be of a period, with Ampthill lamp posts, the Imperial Institute, and *The Times*. They delight the connoisseur; but have no great significance to the man in the street. They are full of pedigrees of farm livestock which never had practical value; and they are the collected biographies of men who chose dairy bulls only by their shape and stood their beeves hock deep in straw immediately a photographer hove in sight.

Mr Stanford's history of the Friesian breed in Britain has none of this nonsense about it. He approaches the black-and-white cow with a pail in his hand, and judges his stock by yield of milk and not horn shape, by butterfat percentage and not set-on of tail, by calving index and not colouring. His book is, therefore, about the first chronicle of any one breed of stock which is worth its place on the bookshelf, and not in the attic, of the agricultural historian.

The antecedents of the Friesian breed are one of the most tantalizing mysteries in farm history. From what European stock did it evolve; how closely is it related to the dairy cow which was the foundation of the great medieval dairy industry of the Low Countries; when did this type first come into Britain—was it to the monastic farms, or in the sixteenth century, or not until the 'Dutch cow' began to catch the attention of the English farming writers of the late seventeenth century? These, and a dozen more, questions come to mind. Netherlands research has not yet found the answers, nor yet Mr Fussell's work from the British side; and Mr Stanford may therefore be excused for his failure to take these matters any further.

It is certain that Dutch cattle carrying factors of size, high milk yield, and colour marking were in England from at least the time of the Restoration. They had soon afterwards established the prototypical Shorthorn of the north-east coast and a short-lived southern Shorthorn breed in Kent. They moved out from these centres, strengthened by new direct imports, to modify British local stock into the Hereford beef breed, the dual-purpose Longhorn, and the dairy Gloucesters and Ayrshires; and the Low Countries blood also probably influenced indirectly the present Channel Island, Red Poll, and South Devon breeds. There are, therefore, no modern milch breeds in Britain, except the Kerry, which do not stem in greater or lesser degree from Low Countries stock; and only the whole-coloured black and red breeds and the Highlander among beef types have been kept free from any recognizable Low Countries cross.

All this great inpouring into the melting-pot of British bovine stock Mr Stanford only touches upon lightly. The history of the British Friesian as such is his prime concern. This had its first beginnings in Britain about half way through the nineteenth century—rather earlier than Mr Stanford suggests—when a proportion of Dutch cattle imported on the hoof for meat began to be retained on farms. From about 1870 Friesian herds begin to appear, of which the Terling herd of Lord Rayleigh, started about 1890, is the earliest still to survive.

The British Friesian Cattle Society was founded in 1909. It took the Society's first honorary inspectors three years to sort out about 7,000 acceptable animals from the tens of thousands of commercial black-and-whites as foundation stock for the first herd book. The breed was first scheduled at the Royal Show in 1911, and drew a dozen entries; and at the first Terling sale in the same year an average of only £25 8s. a head was returned. The Friesian in Britain was then very much of a cow-keeper's cow. Its present eminence is due mainly to the work of the Breed Society under a succession of shrewd leaders. The

founder of the H.M.V. gramophone business, Mr Trevor Williams, was one of the first of these. In 1912 he was in negotiation with the Ministry of Agriculture for the import of selected new blood from Holland, so that the hotch-potch of black-and-whites could be made into a homogeneous breed. Members of the Society's council themselves financed the first importation of 60 animals, in 1914, from milk-recorded stock in Holland. They cost less than £2,500 and were sold for £15,000—and the handsome windfall was the foundation of the Society's financial stability.

Four years later the first 2,000-galloner appeared—Eske Hetty, bred by Lord Rayleigh from an ancestry which was "shrouded in mystery." Performances of this calibre, and the post-war boom, caused prices to rise to fantastic heights; in 1919 four animals from the Rayleigh stud made £14,385. The excitements of these days are brought out well in this book, with vivid anecdote and a judicious selection of detail. Mr Stanford, unlike earlier historians of other breeds, is also candid about the Society's failures and the breed's shortcomings.

Despite a few setbacks, the Friesians could by 1925 boast six 3,000-gallонers; and by then over 160 animals in the breed had passed the 2,000-gallon yield mark, against only sixteen in all the other breeds in Britain put together. The supremacy of the British Friesian as a milk producer was now unchallenged; and it had been achieved in less than two decades of work by the breed Society and in little more than a generation's work by breeders. With such a subject Mr Stanford could hardly have failed to do justice to a piece of rural history as impelling as any in the long story of British agriculture.

R. TROW-SMITH

P. M. SYNGE and Miss G. E. PETERSON, eds.,
The Fruit Year Book, 1958. Royal Horticultural Society, 1957. 176 pp., illus. 10s. The 1958 edition of *The Fruit Year Book* maintains the high standard of production of previous numbers at the same very reasonable price. In addition to covering topics of

interest to amateur and commercial fruit-growers this edition contains several articles of a historical nature.

In 'John Laurence and his pears' Professor H. W. Miles describes the fruit-growing activities in the early eighteenth century of this enthusiastic clergyman, who, like many of the same calling since, did much by his example and writings to encourage the art of gardening. He published *The Clergyman's Recreation* in 1714 and *The Gentleman's Recreation* in 1716, and the charming frontispiece of the latter book is reproduced here. Professor Miles points out that Laurence's list of varieties of pears contains a few still occasionally to be found today.

The Rev. C. L. Dunkerley writing on 'Some notable nineteenth-century English fruit books' places Ronald's *Pyrus Malus Brentfordiensis*, published in 1831, as marking "the end of an age of great and glorious fruit books"—those lavishly illustrated "pomonas" costing at the time anything from thirty to fifty guineas each. Books produced in the period from 1831 to 1865 were written for a less exclusive and more technically minded public, but, nevertheless, writers like Charles McIntosh and Benjamin Maund, whose works are described here, also illustrated their books with beautiful engravings coloured by hand. Three of these are reproduced in the *Year Book*. Mr Dunkerley expresses some surprise that McIntosh should refer so freely to Latin and Greek authors, and attributes this to the fact that Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* had been published only a few years previously. The practice of reproducing classical advice on gardening, however, was indulged in by only too many writers of horticultural books from Thomas Hyll (1563) onwards.

The Gardener's and Forester's Record, a monthly publication of the 1830's, is the subject of a short note by H. H. Crane. We are told that this periodical, also illustrated with hand-coloured engravings was originally published at 6d. per copy!

Many horticultural crops suffer from the dictates of fashion and wax and wane in

popularity in an unpredictable way. Miss B. A. Rake in 'The history of gooseberries in England' describes how this fruit, not very popular today, was the subject of tremendous enthusiasm in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when members of Gooseberry Clubs were actively engaged in breeding more and more new varieties. By 1831 there were 722 varieties in existence.

The history of such a popular domestic fruit as the apple, which, as stated by C. S. Gundry in 'The evolution of apple growing in England', can be traced for at least 2,000 years, must inevitably have social implications of a much wider nature. Mr Gundry compresses a great deal of information into his essay which covers the whole of this period, and it is to be hoped that he will have the opportunity of continuing and expanding this work. Apple growing represents a highly developed skill, particularly in the propagation of the trees by grafting, a practice which was certainly known to the Romans. Mr Gundry is perhaps over cautious in stating in reference to the fifteenth century that "it can be assumed that this operation was commonly used *even* in those days." Grafting was practised by Brithnod, first Abbot of Ely, towards the end of the tenth century, and it is a matter of speculation whether or not such skills were really lost for any length of time during the period following the departure of the Romans from this country. One would like to know much more about the standard of horticultural practices during pre-Norman and early medieval times.

R. R. Williams contributes some historical notes on perry pears, those ancient, great pear trees which are such a feature of Herefordshire and other west midland counties even at the present day. Mr Williams recounts some of the delightful names of these old varieties; Merrylegs, Mumblehead, Lumberskull, and others with a flavour evocative of the eighteenth century, when indeed some of the existing trees were planted. He makes a plea for the revival of interest in this fruit and its end-product.

All of these articles make enjoyable reading, and it is to be regretted that *The Fruit Year Book* is now emulating the biennial habit of some of our well-known apple varieties.

WINIFRED M. DULLFORCE

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE. *The Agricultural Register*. New Series, *Changes in the Economic Pattern*, 1956-7. Oxford University Press. 234 pp. 21s.

Twenty years ago the Agricultural Economics Research Institute under Dr Orwin published six annual volumes of the *Agricultural Register* which provided in a compact form all the facts that any one was likely to need on the output, prices, legislation, and administration of British farming. In 1953 and 1954 a series of supplements to the *Farm Economist* contained similar information for the major products (excluding milk) over the intervening years of war and post-war planning. Under Mr Colin Clark the Institute has now resumed the pre-war pattern with a volume dealing roughly with the two price reviews of 1956 and 1957 and the year between. Separate chapters deal with the development of agricultural policy; the changes in output of the principal commodities, the activities of the various marketing boards and imports of competing supplies; the negotiations over the European free trade area, the common market and G.A.T.T.; agricultural workers and wages; rents, land values, and credit; the prices and supplies of other inputs, and the various grants in aid of production. The text is mainly a commentary on the ninety-two statistical tables, supplemented by summaries of current legislation. The authors are to be congratulated on their clear and concise exposition and the price is remarkably moderate for a book containing so much tabular matter. The absence of references no doubt helped to make possible this low price but nevertheless detracts rather from the usefulness of this undoubtedly useful work of reference.

EDITH H. WHETHAM

ANDREAS HOLMSEN, HALVARD BJÖRKVIK, and RIGMOR FRIMANSLUND, *The Old Norwegian Peasant Community*. Reprint from *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, Uppsala, 1956. 82 pp.

The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, founded in Oslo in 1922, here makes available the first fruits of a part of its work in three very readable papers in English. They are a general survey and historical introduction by Professor Andreas HolmSEN; an account of farmsteads, villages, field systems, and ownership by Halvard Björkvik, and a paper on farm community and neighbourhood community by Rigmor Frimannslund. The two latter papers are largely based on material from western Norway where older social and farming patterns linger in communities isolated by difficult physical conditions. The Oslo institute is accumulating by questionnaire and field study a wealth of material which is the envy of less well-endowed institutions in western Europe. These papers indicate its scope and progress and summarize and analyse a portion of it. The papers describe and explain the lay-out of fjord-side farms and fields. They provide interesting contrasts with farming communities in less harsh European environments and are a pattern for local study everywhere. The excellent text figures include line drawings by Arne Berg in which settlements of 1880 are reconstructed in elevation. Line drawings of this type, a feature of Irish folk-life studies, could be more widely used to illuminate, and replace, some of the detail now used to describe farms and fields and folk.

MARGARET DAVIES

D. R. DENMAN, *Origins of Ownership*. Allen and Unwin, 1958. 190 pp. 22s. 6d.

The subtitle of this book describes its content. It is a "brief history of landownership and tenure from earliest times to the modern era," that is from Prehistory (Cap. I) through Roman Britain, Old England, and the Norman Kings (II-IV) to the Middle Ages (V-VI). There is a separate chapter on Land

in the Boroughs (VII). The book is a synthesis of considerable reading over a very wide field, and its peculiar virtue is that it brings together conclusions of social, economic, and legal historians, and is written for none or for all of them. Thus the medieval (and modern) lawyer's strict division of tenures and his insistence on uncertainty as the true test of villeinage are exposed as not fitting the facts of medieval life; at all times an attempt is made to get at the reasons for change and development in the law. So much has been compressed into a small book that there is some obscurity. *Alodiarii*, *bordarii*, and *cotarii* make sudden entrances and exits — who were they? The assizes of novel disseisin and mort d'ancestor occur without explanation. The definitions of primer seisin, escheat, and forfeiture are very odd. Complex issues are presented fairly, yet with such metaphoric brevity that the reader may be better informed but cannot be wiser. Exceptionally, the reasons for making Domesday and the development of sales of works to bond tenants are discussed at sufficient length to arouse interest and send the beginner to the bibliographies.

This is, in short, an interesting and a puzzling book. The aim of the author, as stated in his preface, is "by dealing with the historical development of fundamental principles of proprietorship, to review briefly the stories" about "the origins of land ownership in England;" and to "draw them together in a single narrative." There is vagueness in this. What are "the fundamental principles of proprietorship;" what is meant by "ownership"? These basic questions are nowhere discussed; there is no general introduction and no conclusion. There are, rarely, broad statements: "the lord's interest, his *seignory*, is not absolute ownership. It is not ownership under the omnicompetent will of the lord, within the grace of which the tenant is granted sanction of occupation. The tenant's interest, his *feudum*, is truly ownership" (p. 80). The meaning is not wholly clear, but certainly the bald assertion that the *feudum* is truly ownership must sound strange to any one acquain-

ted with jurisprudence and the *dominium* of Roman Law. To a lawyer the truth of this contention depends on the nature of the claim, or the result of success, in a real action brought by the tenant of such a *feudum*. It is, of course, important to know what were the social and economic facts as well as what were the legal rights of those who had interests in land, but these legal rights have to be considered, and it is not enough to say that the early common law "is not judge-made law; it is revealed law" (p. 107). The substantive common law of land depended on the writ system and the judges who enforced the writs. Without a writ to defend his possession or assert his claim to land, a man was powerless at law. Many writs were based on a *seisin* by the claimant or his ancestor. To exclude the writs and to give half a page to *seisin* is to make impossible any analysis of ownership in early English law.

There remains a stimulating survey of landholding in town and country for which beginners will be grateful and in which those who are further advanced will find much of interest. To lawyers in particular the wide sweep of the work should be a salutary reminder of the narrowness of conventional legal history.

G. D. G. HALL

AGRONOMISCH-HISTORISCHE BIJDRAGEN, published by the Studiekring voor Geschiedenis van de Landbouw. Vol. IV containing (1) Ir. W. J. Dewez, *De Landbouw in Brabants Westhoek in het midden van de achttiende eeuw*; (2) Prof. B. H. Slicher van Bath, *Een Fries Landbouwbedrijf in de tweede helft van de zestiende eeuw*. H. Veenman & Zonen, Wageningen, 1958. viii+208 pp. (No price stated.)

These two studies, combined with that of J. A. Kuperus, *Resultaten van een Groninger Landbouwbedrijf (1832-1876)* published in vol. III of *Historia Agriculturae*, provide a general outline of the work done and the results obtained in three areas of Holland during three centuries. All are based on original documents.

The sixteenth-century material used by

Prof. Slicher is an account book kept by Rienck Hemmema from 1 May 1569 to 31 December 1573, which is very completely analysed in a careful introduction, followed by a transcript of the text. It is a detailed document that compares favourably with Robert Loder's *Farm Accounts* and with the *Account Book of a Kentish Estate*, both relating to English farming in the seventeenth century. The methods of working the arable land are discussed, the general routine being a rotation of cereals and pulse, either alternately or two crops of grain followed by pulse, as dictated by the fluctuations of price. The animal husbandry, which included dairy work, is equally clear. The economics of the holding disclose the labour employed and wages paid, and the domestic conditions. Since the work was done in time of war the document is quite remarkable.

The basis of Ir. Dewez's essay is a report on the leaseholds of a number of tenants in Brabants Westhoek made by Johan Dingemans in 1740. The tenants were heavily in debt to their landlord, and the report provides material showing the size of holdings, the use of the land as between arable and grassland, the crops grown on the arable, the maintenance of the grassland, and the purposes for which the cattle were kept, e.g., for milk or beef and manure production, and the kinds of livestock, horses, pigs, sheep, and poultry carried. One interesting point that emerges is that there has been comparatively little change in the number and size of holdings in the area from the date of this report until modern times. The cereal crops grown were mainly wheat, barley, and oats, and there was some clover and artificial grass. Fodder crops were beans, peas, and buckwheat. A few potatoes were grown. Industrial crops were madder, coleseed, and flax, but these do not seem to have been grown on a large scale. The fallow still came round regularly in the rotation, but clover and artificial grass had already taken the place of a proportion of it. Possibly the farmers had changed the old three-course for a six-course by using the second fallow to grow clover, artificial grass, and buckwheat.

Horses were bred in some numbers. The maintenance of cows was calculated at 1·3 per hectare, not very different from the English standard of that date. Little information can be gathered about pigs, which were probably mainly used for domestic consumption. The results show that the net income was very small. Prices were low, and rents high.

These two studies are a welcome addition to our knowledge of the history of Dutch farming.

G. E. FUSSELL

B. H. SLICHER VAN BATH, *Een Samenleving onder Spanning* (A society in tension). *Geschiedenis van het platteland in Overijssel*. Vol. 1. *Historische Sociografieën van het Platteland*. Van Gorcum & Co., N.V., Assen, Holland, 1957. x+768 pp., illus. Hfl. 25.

Holland is a small country, and Overijssel is one of its provinces. As the title of the series indicates, this study is devoted mainly to the social and economic history of this province from the early middle ages to the present day. Careful studies of such localities are important in their bearing upon wider areas of social history. It could not, of course, neglect the development of agriculture, which is a fundamental; but the tension arose when the population increased more rapidly than the area of cultivable land could be expanded with the contemporary means available.

Different parts of the country were affected differently at different dates. Already in Carolingian times and the following centuries there was some urban settlement in Deventer, Oldenzaal, Ootmarsum, and Goor, but this characteristic development became more marked in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The large-scale peasant farmers formed the oldest kernel of population, for it is clear that the Salland district to the west of Zwollerkerspel, the High Shrievalty of Hasselt, and the whole of Vollenhove were very thinly populated in the early middle ages. The oldest settlements were on the Salland and Twente sand land and the river clay along the banks of the river IJssel. The pre-con-

quest population here was not, however, so dense as that in England, but was about double that of the Mosel between Coblenz and Trier. Professor Slicher shows that right down to A.D. 1250 Overijssel was in fact rather underpopulated.

He points out that the thirteenth century was a time of prosperity all over Western Europe, coupled with a large increase of population. Overijssel followed the same pattern. It was during this period that a class of *keuters* (crofters), people with no hereditary or semi-hereditary rights to land occupation, appeared. It was in this century that the moorland of Vollenhove was settled. The population here were cattle breeders, fishers, and barge crews. These occupations were so different from arable farming that the settlers came from Friesland and elsewhere. Though there was probably little or no over-population in the sand land by 1475, there was a density of 16·06 persons per square kilometre as against 5·1 before 1200 over all Overijssel. During the following two centuries this figure rose to 21·30. The appearance of the *keuters* and the beginnings of the textile and turf-cutting industries are perhaps sufficiently explained by this large increase in population.

Professor Slicher has tabulated the further developments as heavy over-population and the growth of industry between 1650 and 1815: a reversion to farming with progressive methods from 1815 to 1890, with no over-population: and from 1890 to the present day the rise of farming to greater importance in the economy of the province than industry, with a consequent agrarian over-population. It seems that the term over-population is used in the sense of a number of people greater than could be provided with food from the available land surface.

Between 1675 and 1755 the possibilities of expanding the cultivated area were slight, and the arable farmers suffered through low grain prices. The area cultivated was also restricted by the scarcity of manure, the supplies of *plaggenbemesting* (turf manure), and other factors such as the decline in cattle numbers through losses by disease. The result was that

the expansion of the arable area did not keep pace with the population. Insufficient food was produced and the weavers in Almelo, for example, reduced to poverty, became slack and spineless. But the outbreaks of cattle disease resulted in an extension of grain-growing. The wars of the eighteenth century brought a temporarily renewed prosperity to the textile industry, but an industrial crisis after 1760 affected both that occupation and the turf-digging of Vollenhove. Other industries there were none, and poverty increased very largely. A desperate population took refuge in a large consumption of alcohol, in Holland brandy as in England it had used gin. After 1760, however, grain prices rose again, but not wages. The only bright spot in the general gloom of poverty was the agricultural improvement that took place after 1760.

The potato was introduced in the second half of the eighteenth century, and was used both as food for the poor, and for cattle feed. Buckwheat was another important new crop. It had been known in the fifteenth century, but its great expansion took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was grown for cattle feed on burned-over heath land. Most important of all was the better type of cattle bred as the ravages of disease were being restored, and these gave larger supplies of animal manure to supplement the turf, and added nitrogen to the soil. Both cows and pigs increased in number in the early nineteenth century. The improvement of the cultivated land included better grassland so that grazing cows on the commons became less necessary, and controlled breeding simple.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of prosperity. There was less potato disease in Overijssel than in other parts of Europe, and this meant good fortune for the growers. By 1850 Overijssel was less industrial than in 1795. Then came the agricultural crisis of the later years. The spirit of reclamation declined. After 1889 urbanization took pride of place, especially in Twente. The introduction of steam power to the textile industry about 1860 was an important factor

here, and a second industrial period began. It was the fourth phase in the course of development: first agriculture, then domestic industry, next renewed and improved farming, and finally factory industry.

This book is a pioneer work, and all that it is possible to do is to give some indication of its contents. Professor Slicher has been fortunate in the wealth of new sources he has been able to consult, and he has made ample use of them. The study is very detailed and deserves to be read with attention. It has a good deal to tell us, by implication if not by specific statement, of how men met the consequences of their own increase in one small area of the earth's surface. It however presents some difficulties for English readers unless a large-scale map of the province is used; at least that is what I have found.

G. E. FUSSELL

Report of the Royal Commission on Common Land, 1955-1958, Cmnd. 462, H.M.S.O., 1958. viii + 284 pp., illus. 14s.

Authoritative accounts of the common land of England and Wales are all too rare, and much of the available information is difficult of access. Hence the publication of this Royal Commission Report will be widely welcomed. An official report, it nevertheless makes absorbing reading. It deals with such common land as remains today, that is, largely unenclosed commons or open pasture, and some common meadows. In the first six chapters, status, ownership, management and use, and the necessary safeguards are among the matters reviewed, and these are followed by two chapters setting out the recommendations. The second half of the volume consists of Appendices of great interest.

In Appendix II, 'History of Common Land and Common Rights', Dr W. G. Hoskins deals with the subject historically from the earliest times, and his division of the history of commons into six main periods is illuminating, and provides a masterly key to their story. He looks briefly at the open arable fields only in so far as their history is linked with the expansion or contraction of the commons. The

agricultural historian will turn to this succinct account with gratitude.

Appendix III, 'Some Legal Problems', by Sir Ivor Jennings, traces these problems back to numerous Commons Acts and to other Acts dealing with inclosure and property, as well as to custom and common law. In doing so, he underlines the extraordinary complexity of the legal position today.

Several tables and two maps summarize the distribution of common land in 1873 and 1956-8 by counties. The information is amplified by Professor L. Dudley Stamp in Appendix IV, 'The Geographical Distribution of Common Land'. In eighty-three pages he brings together largely unpublished material, the fruits of extensive enquiries in every county in England and Wales. The treatment is by counties grouped in five regional blocks, and many features of interest are brought out: for example, the geological basis of the distribution of the surviving commons, which are, after all, largely residual; the difficulties of management; the variations in utilization; the differences between English and Welsh commons; and, most striking, the discrepancies between the returns for commons acreage in 1873 and 1956-8, and between these and the area of rough grazing at both dates.

As the Report makes amply clear, the one and a half million acres of common land which survive today are fraught with problems of every kind: problems of ownership, of forgotten or disputed rights, of ancient claims and customs, and of the incompatibility of time-honoured rights and new demands. Historic uses like grazing, estovers, and turbary, are frequently at variance with the present need to expand our home timber supplies, to erect electric pylons, to develop water catchment areas, and to provide space for the re-creation of large urban populations. Thus drainage, quarrying, and mining, housing programmes, increasing food production, green belts, and many other familiar matters are associated with the question of what we are to do with the remaining commons and whether they are, in fact, to be regarded as outmoded remnants of a vanishing system of

communal farming or to be valued as "unique as a reservoir of land which has not been fully exploited."

It is, significantly, to the latter view that the Commission leans. As is rightly pointed out, the value of the commons and the needs of the public today are utterly different from those of a century ago, so a century and more hence they are likely to be different again. Hence the need to regard the commons as both a heritage from the past enshrining much of ancient custom and historic interest, and as a trust to be wisely administered both for today and tomorrow. The recommendations stress the need for registering and mapping all common land, for safeguarding existing rights, ensuring public access, and at the same time allowing for development or improvement schemes for projects of national or regional importance.

There is no doubt as to the timeliness of this volume. The need for a clarification of the position and the formulation of a realistic policy was urgent. In conducting these enquiries, the Commission has weighed a vast amount of evidence, pondered innumerable problems, and made valuable recommendations. It has also produced a Report which is likely to remain a standard work on the subject for many years to come, and at the same time to act as a stimulus for the further research which our common lands still merit.

DOROTHY SYLVESTER

DOROTHY SYLVESTER and GEOFFREY NULTY (eds.), *The Historical Atlas of Cheshire*. Cheshire Community Council, 53 Watergate Row, Chester; 1958. viii+64 pp. 10s. 6d.

It will be a thousand pities if the circulation of this atlas is limited to the county of origin, for it contains material of great interest to all students of English local history. Readers of this REVIEW, in particular, should be grateful for the maps illustrating the distribution of open arable and common meadow, the selection of rural plans, and the three Domesday maps of (a) wastes and woodlands, (b) manorial population, (c) agriculture and industry.

It has taken nearly six years to collect the information embodied in the atlas, and the result constitutes an example which other counties will do well to follow. The editors hint at the possibility of a second volume. If this is forthcoming, one may hope that the lettering of the maps will be brought into closer conformity with Ordnance Survey standards. In all other respects the atlas is extremely well presented. The Cheshire Community Council deserves the gratitude of students for making it available at so modest a price.

H. P. R. FINBERG

E. W. MARTIN, *Where London Ends: English Provincial Life after 1750*. Phoenix House, 1958. 312 pp., illus. 30s.

This is a polemical, nostalgic, pretentious book. It is polemical because the purpose of the material that Mr Martin has collected on local government, religion, education, medicine, and the press is to point his argument that the country town has something valuable to contribute to English life as a counterbalance to the 'metropolitanism' of London and the big industrial cities, and not just to give an account of English provincial life since 1750. It is nostalgic because Mr Martin looks back to a time when towns were small and agriculture and industry "blended." He wants what he calls his two divisions of England to draw nearer together in amity and understanding till they achieve Charles Kingsley's ideal of "a complete interpenetration of city and country, a complete fusion of their different modes of life, and a confirmation of the advantages of both, such as no country in the world has ever seen." Or is ever likely to see, might well be the comment. For such a view is unhistorical. We certainly need to know more about the history—and sociology—of towns. Nevertheless there is no denying the stagnation or shrinkage of most of the small market towns which find favour in Mr Martin's eyes. And of recent years the criticism of the 'garden city' idea, which might provide one practical expression of them, has been growing. At the same time he does less than justice to the contribution the

large industrial cities make to cultural life. Nasty as they seem to Mr Martin living in his Devon village, the large industrial towns, and particularly London, continue to expand because of what they positively have to offer. They offer different attractions from the small market town but not necessarily inferior ones. Privacy may be preferred to neighbourliness. Mr Martin's case is pretentiously presented in inelegant prose with an ostentatious parade of authorities and a misleading series of references. For the general reader this may not matter, but it should not pass without comment in a scholarly journal. It is impossible to trace quotations, because no page references are given, and *op. cit.*'s and *ibid.*'s abound. For example, "Smailes, *op. cit.*" appears on p. 117, but the title of the book is given more than sixty pages earlier on p. 41. In any competition for titles which best obscure the contents of the books they adorn, Mr Martin, with *Where London Ends* to follow *The Secret People*, must be well in the lead. The serious student of agrarian history will find little in Mr Martin's book to repay his effort in reading it, but it will lend confidence to those who already share the author's views.

W. E. MINCHINTON

W. D. PARISH and HELENA HALL, *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect and Collection of Provincialisms in use in the County of Sussex*. R. J. Acford, Industrial Estate, Chichester, 1957. xxii + 186 pp., illus. 35s.

The Rev. W. D. Parish, vicar of Selmeston (pronounced 'Simpson'), published *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect* in 1875; it has long been out of print, and Miss Helena Hall, who with her brother had for many years collected additional material, has now incorporated the whole of Parish's work, including the delightful anecdotes with which he illustrated the Sussex use of words, in this much extended *Dictionary*, adding to its value with numerous thumb-nail sketches, mostly of agricultural implements. It is a remarkable achievement for one now in her eighties—an age the more noteworthy when we read the item—"Snotty-gog. A yew berry or fruit. As

children we used to eat them, expelling the pips.' Possibly the poison of the yew is confined to the pips and foliage; but few people would have commended its berries as food for children.

Both Parish and Miss Hall have realized the impossibility of completely segregating 'Sussex' words; many of the words here given are found not only in neighbouring counties but in distant parts of the country. They are, however, all non-dictionary words which have been noted in use in Sussex. In one instance, however, Miss Hall leans over the other way. After describing 'Rides'—the doorband part of a hinge, which rides on the 'hook'—she adds, "Really a technical term and not provincial." But it is both; for, at any rate down to the seventeenth century, 'hooks and rides' was a term confined to Sussex and Kent. The local names for birds and flowers, and for the typically Sussex product of mud (gawm, gubber, slub, stuggy, clodgy, etc.) are fascinating; and if 'rebellious' for bilious and 'collapse of the sun' for eclipse are idiosyncratic rather than provincial, they show the countryman's determination to be the master and not the servant of words. A delightful appendix of Sussex Sayings and Crafts completes this remarkable book and includes recipes for various Sussex dishes, such as 'Plumeavies'—though personally I maintain that they should be cut square and not round.

L. F. SALZMAN

JOAN THIRSK and JEAN IMRAY (eds.), *Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century*. Suffolk Records Society, Vol. 1. County Hall, Ipswich. 178 pp. 30s.

This first publication of the Suffolk Records Society consists of a memoir of V. B. Redstone and Miss L. J. Redstone, who played a large part in the establishment of the record offices in Bury and Ipswich; an essay of some twenty pages on Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century; and a hundred and thirty-three pages of extracts from record material, mainly from the East or West Suffolk County Record Offices and private owners.

Mrs Thirsk's essay, in extremely readable

style, is adequate, but tends to perpetuate the conventional outline of nineteenth-century agricultural history interlarded with Suffolk examples. It does not, and probably in the space and time available could not, set out to be a penetrating study of the agriculture of the county within the period.

One must, however, question the value of devoting so much space to the reproduction of extracts from record material. Some are entertaining, some by themselves of interest, but, simply because they are extracts, few can be of use to the serious student. There cannot really be much justification at a time when publication costs are so high for devoting a complete volume to a kind of pot-pourri reflecting on the general fortunes of agriculture in the county. Indeed, at the best the documents are expanded footnotes to the essay.

If there had been available one kind of material as extensive, say, as Robert Loder's Farm Accounts (Camden Society, Third Series, LIII), then there might have been justification for editing and publishing a substantial part of it. Much of the material in the extracts is of the kind we should expect to find in county record offices or among estate papers (letters about rent reduction, specifications of cottages, negotiations for a lease or the premiums offered by the East Suffolk Agricultural Association in 1849). Others, such as extracts from a Select Committee of Evidence or Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, come from published sources.

From the material which Mrs Thirsk and Miss Imray have gathered together it is clear that there exists in the county a wealth of material for a really comprehensive study of Suffolk Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century. The present volume cannot be described as more than a well-produced appetite whetter, or, to borrow a term from the cinema, a 'trailer'.

It is sad not to speak better of it, for the Suffolk Records Society is the first to be founded by voluntary subscription since the war and sets in this first volume a high and worthy standard of book-production.

J. W. Y. HIGGS

H. C. PAWSON, *Robert Bakewell*. Crosby Lockwood, 1957. viii+200 pp., illus. 25s. Robert Bakewell is accepted as one of the great pioneers of livestock farming, and would appear to provide an ideal subject for a biography. Professor Pawson has obviously had a keen interest in the Leicestershire breeder for many years and it is largely thanks to his efforts that a collection of letters from Bakewell to George Culley was discovered and is now lodged at King's College, Newcastle. The second half of this book consists of a transcript of these and other letters, a valuable primary source for agricultural historians. They contain conclusive proof of Bakewell's bankruptcy and reveal many interesting aspects of his character, breeding methods, and business outlook. The prices he got for hiring his rams were notoriously high, but he certainly would not have agreed with modern breeders who publicize high prices as a good advertisement; he believed that "talking of prices rather harms the cause, for if some People can not have the Best they will not have another . . . therefore I think the less said of it the better."

The first part of the book is a long essay giving the main details of Bakewell's life and some account of his breeding methods. Professor Cooper contributes a present-day valuation of his work, suggesting that its major feature was the development of the progeny test as the basis of a selection programme.

Although this book is a useful addition to our knowledge of Bakewell, it is not a complete or definitive biography—and was not probably intended to be. It is to be hoped, however, that it will encourage the publication of authoritative biographies of other outstanding agriculturalists, for these can provide invaluable contributions to our understanding of agrarian history and usually have a wider reading appeal than general histories. An essential feature of such biographies, however, should be to help us to understand, not only how a particular individual succeeded in solving certain problems, but why such problems had become of universal importance at the relevant time. A little more historic per-

spective would have made this book on Bakewell even more useful.

GEORGE HOUSTON

J. F. SMITHCORS, *Evolution of the Veterinary Art. A narrative account to 1850*. Veterinary Medicine Publishing Co., Kansas City, Miss., 1957. \$6.50.

This is the first comprehensive study of the history of veterinary medicine to appear since the vast work of Major-General Sir Frederick Smith, the final volume of which was published in 1933. (His name is rather oddly given in the bibliography as Smith, F.) It is by so much the more welcome. Naturally it owes a great deal to Sir Frederick, and unfortunately it accepts some of his dogma rather uncritically.

It is easy to do so. Perhaps the most difficult thing for a writer of technical or scientific history is to project himself into the mental atmosphere of an earlier time. Sir Frederick was certainly not able to do this. Markham and Mascall, writing in the early seventeenth century, were obviously ignorant compared with their twentieth-century successors, but Smith condemns them out of hand as ignorant quacks, and Mr Smithcors follows suit. No doubt they were when judged by the measure of modern knowledge, and truly some of their suggested cures were barbarous and disgusting, but they were men of their own time, and they, like the rest of us, were confined within the restricted boundaries of contemporary science. It is insufficient to dismiss them for this reason.

On the other hand, Mr Smithcors is inclined to attribute modern knowledge to much more ancient writers. For example, on p. 124 he infers that the Welsh knew before the Norman Conquest that liver fluke infestation was caused by grazing wet herbage where the snail host had its habitat. In his discussion of ancient Egyptian, Vedic, and Chinese writings he has taken a similar line. He believes that these ancients possessed elements of modern knowledge, and this may, in fact, be due to his interpretation of their writings in the light of modern science rather than

their actual content. Similar conclusions have been reached by writers in other fields, and must be received with equal reserve.

The literature of the more modern period is more accessible, and possibly more generally known, and, despite his frequent reliance upon and acceptance of Sir Frederick Smith's judgements, Mr Smithcros easily unravels the tangled skein of development. Many ancient errors were perpetuated until the nineteenth century, and much of the treatment of animal disease was left in the hands of ignorant farriers, horse leeches, and cow doctors who relied upon traditional methods, which seem to us blatantly ill-judged, even cruel, and often much worse than the disease.

The modern science of veterinary medicine may perhaps be said to have been founded by the horse anatomy of Ruini, and it developed slowly during the eighteenth century, though practice lagged far behind theory. The elementary job of shoeing was often badly done,

and the horse's hooves mutilated before the shoe was nailed on. Most of the writers on the subject, too, were shameless plagiarists. With the founding of the French veterinary schools improvements began to be made. The establishment of the London and Edinburgh colleges followed nearly half a century later, and from that time progress has continued, though at first it was not all that had been expected.

The book, like others of its type, is a useful summary of the subject, and has the merit of being written by a modern scientist, but here and there it is marred by a lamentable facetiousness, which seems inappropriate in a serious treatise. This should be eliminated in any future edition. It would also be improved by the expression of a more personal judgement, and less reliance upon authority. Nevertheless it is convenient to have such a work at hand, and, if used with discretion, it forms a useful work of reference.

G. E. FUSSELL

Letter to the Editor

SIR.—Thanks to the kindness of Lord Spencer in making me free of the Munitment Room at Althorp, I have for some time past been studying the farming activities of the third Earl Spencer, founder of the Royal Agricultural Society. In one of his Cattle Books under date 19 October 1834 is the entry:

"I find that out of 232 calves bred from alloy cows 138 were breeding heifers. But that out of 224 calves bred from cows not having my alloy 101 were breeding heifers. It seems therefore that it is rather more than 6 to 5

in favour of a bull calf from a cow not having alloy, but 23 to 19 in favour of a heifer from a cow having alloy."

Nowhere else in his papers is this alloy mentioned and it is not the subject of any of his articles published in the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society.

Can any of your readers suggest what it was or tell me of any source where further information about it might be found?

Yours faithfully,

E. H. WYNDHAM

Caversfield, Bicester.

SCOTTISH HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XXXVIII, I APRIL 1959 NUMBER 125

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

The Northmost Castle of Britain
William Dunbar
Summer Sheelings
The 'Huseby' System in Orkney

W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON
DOUGLAS YOUNG
VICTOR CAFFNEY
ASGAUT STEINNES

REVIEWS

The Scottish Burgh
The County of Selkirk

GEORGE S. PRYDE
J. R. C. HAMILTON

SHORT NOTICES

NOTES AND COMMENTS
Act of the Head Court: Elgin-Forres Election

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THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL

No. 272

DECEMBER 1958

VOL. LXVIII

I. ARTICLES

The Cardinal Utility which is Ordinal
Alfred Marshall and the Competitive Firm
Some Marshallian Concepts, especially the Representative Firm
A Pyrrhic Victory
On Growth Models and the Neo-Classical Resurgence
Concentration of Exports and Imports: An International Comparison
Inflation, the Terms of Trade, and the Share of Wages in
National Income
The Optimum Rate of Investment
An Economic Analysis of Fixed Investment

W. J. BAUMOL
D. C. HAGUE
J. A. MAXWELL
H. NEISER
R. EISNER
M. MICHAELY
G. MAYNARD
B. HORVAT
E. J. BROSTER

II. REVIEWS

III. NOTES AND MEMORANDA

IV. RECENT PERIODICALS AND NEW BOOKS

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